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**Evaluation of the Falconbridge  
Foundation School Sponsorship  
Program**

**Final Report**

**The Basic Education and Policy Support  
(BEPS) Activity**

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## PREFACE

The Basic Education and Policy Support Activity (BEPS), a new five-year initiative sponsored by USAID's Center for Human Capacity Development, is designed to improve the quality, effectiveness, and access to formal and nonformal basic education. As an IQC contract type, BEPS operates through both core funds and Mission buy-ins to provide both short- and long-term assistance to Missions and Regional Bureaus.

BEPS focuses on several important program areas: educational policy analysis and reform; basic education; restorative and additive educational work in countries in crisis (presence and non-presence); and the alleviation of abusive child labor. Services to be provided include policy appraisals and assessments, training and institutional strengthening, and the design and implementation of pilot projects, feasibility studies, applied research studies, seminars/workshops, and evaluations. Under BEPS, USAID also will compile and disseminate results, lessons learned, and other generalizable information through electronic networks, training workshops, national conferences, quarterly and annual reports, publications, and other vehicles.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than a decade, the Falconbridge Foundation has been supporting the public elementary schools in two provinces of the Dominican Republic, to improve the school environment and the quality of education. The School Sponsorship Program (*Programa de Apadrinamiento de Escuelas*) is built on local community involvement and responsibility, with a view toward long-term community development. It is a successful, enduring example of a *public/private partnership* in support of traditional public education, with clear benefits to the private firm, the school system, and the local communities. From the point of view of USAID, an important task of this evaluation is to isolate key elements of the sponsorship model, with an eye toward replication elsewhere in the Dominican Republic and potential applications for other countries as well.

The Falconbridge Foundation was created in 1989, by Falconbridge Dominicana, a subsidiary of Falconbridge Limited, a Canadian mining corporation that had been mining nickel in the Bonao region of the Dominican Republic since the mid-1960s. The company's tenure in the community had been difficult since the operation began, plagued by protests, demonstrations, and resistance. The Foundation was formed as the company's tool for improving its relationship with the local community and ending the disruptions. It has been successful in this task.

The goal of the Foundation, as stated in its purpose statement, is to promote integrated and sustainable community development. Although the Foundation manages a variety of cultural, health, and environmental programs in addition to school sponsorship, increasingly it is focusing its resources in the area of education. The sponsorship program, which began in 1990 in one school, now includes 100 schools and 73,903 students in grades preschool through eight. Sixty of the schools are located in the province of Monseñor Nouel, which is the provincial capital Bonao, and 40 are located in the neighboring province of La Vega. The sponsorship program expanded into La Vega only in 1998. The schools are found in rural, peri-urban, and urban communities. The intention is to expand to 120 schools over the next five years to eventually include all public schools in Monseñor Nouel and 50 schools in La Vega. The annual budget for the school sponsorship program has been approximately US\$120,000 for Monseñor Nouel since 1996, and US\$250,000 for La Vega since 1999.

### Characteristics of the Model

Several key characteristics define the Foundation's school sponsorship model. First, the Foundation sponsors existing public schools. The school faculty is appointed and paid by the Ministry. The schools are built by the government. The Foundation funds only school repairs and furnishing. Second, the program is implemented at the local level in partnership with the local "school community," which includes the school director (the "principal") and teachers, the parents, and the students. The Foundation does not have a fixed agenda for school sponsorship. It responds to requests from the schools on an individual basis. It does not lobby for policy change at the national level. Third, the program is built around implementation of the government's Ten Year Plan for Education (*Plan Decenal de Educación*), and the new Education Law passed in 1997 (*Ley General de Educación No. 66-97*). The standards for infrastructure improvements and for quality of education are those of the public education system as reflected in the legislation.

The Falconbridge Foundation is a non-profit organization, supported almost entirely by annual budget allocations from Falconbridge Dominicana, and governed by a ten-member Board of Directors. The Board includes nationally influential individuals knowledgeable about community development, and four representatives of Falconbridge management. The President of the Board is the President and General Manager of Falconbridge Dominicana. The Board provides policy direction for the Foundation and approves its annual work plan and budget, but it is not involved in operational decisions. The independence of the Foundation staff to develop the program in service to and partnership with the community is essential to gaining the collaboration of the community and managing a process of community involvement. The program could not operate in this way if it were responsive to the short-term interests of the company.

At the same time, as a private, for-profit firm, Falconbridge judges the Foundation on the basis of the results it produces. While the Foundation school sponsorship model is one of process, the private sector requirement for results has forced the Foundation to set realistic boundaries around its programs in what it will fund and what it expects to achieve.

### **Assessment of Achievements**

The core of the evaluation is an assessment of the accomplishments of the Foundation in terms of its stated objectives. The evaluation team used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather information, including school visits and interviews with directors, teachers, parents, and students, classroom observation, and statistical analysis of national testing results, comparing the results for students in schools sponsored by the Foundation with the results for students in other schools in the country.

The objectives of the school sponsorship program are:

- To improve the access and quality of education
- To improve the academic achievement of the students
- To reduce the number of dropouts and overage students in the classrooms
- To contribute to an improved sense of civic responsibility among the students
- To encourage and support the participation of the parents in school activities
- To support activities to increase the self-sufficiency of the school.

The program components to achieve these activities have included:

- Repair and maintenance of the school buildings
- Provision of equipment and furniture for the schools
- Establishment of libraries
- Establishment of school gardens, and in some cases, tree nurseries
- Establishment of preschools
- Strengthening of the parent associations of the schools
- Formation and support of student councils
- Training of the school directors and teachers
- Support for cultural and sports activities
- Provision of an “Escuela de Padres” (A School for Parents)

## **The School Community**

The activities funded under the sponsorship program are implemented in the school by the school community. Sponsorship begins with a solicitation from the school to the Foundation that is co-signed by the director and the parent association, and all subsequent Foundation funding for that school is in response to specific requests from the school community. The Foundation works with the members of the community as partners, asking them to assess their needs and prepare solicitations and to approve the work when it is completed. The parent association incurs responsibilities as well as benefits from the partnership. Responsibilities include maintenance of improvements supported by the Foundation, counterpart contributions on each project, and movement toward self-sufficiency. In interviews, representatives of the parent association voice overwhelming support and appreciation for the sponsorship program, praising most often the improvements in the school in terms of security, and appearance and cleanliness. They positively contrast the mutual relationship they have with the Foundation to the remoteness of the Ministry.

With support from three recent, one-year grants under the USAID Civic Education Project, the Foundation created, trained, and nurtured student councils in 47 of the schools, as described in the General Law of Education. In each school, at least one teacher participated in training to be the coach of the student council. That teacher in turn will train other teachers in the school. The purpose of the program is to learn democratic values through practicing them. The student participants praise the program and clearly articulate its benefits to them. They also describe an active role for themselves as part of the school community. The Foundation is continuing this program even though USAID funding has ended.

The school director is the central figure in the school community, providing support to the parents, students, and teachers, and ensuring that each group has a voice in school affairs. The director also is the link between the local school and the Ministry. Recognizing the importance of this role, the Foundation provides direct support to the directors and organizes training for them in leadership and management, as well as in tools for administration.

## **The School and the Classroom**

The second focus of the evaluation was the classroom experience and the school climate, which are key to the Foundation's objectives to improve the quality of education, reduce the number of school leavers and overage students, and increase student achievement. Each year, the Foundation holds a full schedule of short courses for the teachers on topics such as teaching methods, leadership, disciplinary methods, and self-esteem, to broaden and improve the way the school operates and teaches. In addition, the Foundation field staff and contractors provide technical assistance and support in the schools in implementing the methods presented in the training. A particularly significant activity supported by the Foundation has been the provision of appropriate teaching materials and training for preschool teachers. Preschool has been shown to be a significant factor in later student achievement. The Foundation-sponsored schools were pioneers in this arena in the Dominican Republic.

The improvements in the school buildings and the training for the directors and teachers have had a strongly positive effect on the school climate. The teachers report lower absenteeism, and

the parents say their children like coming to school. In the classrooms, however, the application of the improved teaching methods is uneven. The evaluation suggests that additional attention be given directly to assisting the teachers in the classroom and to assuring that student learning is increasing.

### **Student Achievement**

The comparisons of student achievement, and thereby quality of the education received, for students in the sponsored schools and students in other public and private schools were based on the national examinations for Spanish and mathematics given to all eighth students at the end of the school year. Across the board, scores were low. Scores were higher for the private school students than for the public school students, and girls scored higher than boys. In general, the scores for the students in schools sponsored by the Foundation were as high or higher than for other public school students. While these results are encouraging, they reiterate the need for increased emphasis on the academic tasks of the school in order to see significant improvements in education quality and student achievement.

### **Replication of the Model**

The final part of the evaluation involves an examination of the Foundation's school sponsorship program in terms of the way the parts of the model fit together and of its costs. The primary interest for USAID is whether and how the Falconbridge Foundation's model of school sponsorship can be used as a springboard for additional public/private collaboration in support of public education.

To carry out the sponsorship program, the Foundation must manage a network of relationships. In its role as the intermediary between the private sector firm and the community, it must recognize and meet the expectations and needs of these distinct and often confrontational clients. The Foundation also works directly with the Ministry of Education, building this relationship primarily at the level of the local school, which is unusual in the highly centralized bureaucracy. Each party in the network benefits from the sponsorship program; each also makes a contribution. The Foundation field staff are teachers employed by the Ministry but working full time with the Foundation. The Ministry also provides the space for the Foundation's field office in Bonaó. Falconbridge Dominicana provides the budget and vision for the Foundation, as well as various types of in-kind support. The school community and its organizations must be active participants in the local program and provide both maintenance and counterpart contributions for each project. The Foundation itself has developed a reputation as a "serious" program, responsive to local community needs and priorities, with clear guidelines for sponsorship and funding that are objectively, fairly, and competently administered. It is a program that has evolved and matured over the last decade.

While the financial contribution of Falconbridge Dominicana to public education and community development since 1990 has been substantial, the investment has not involved extravagant expenditures in the region's schools. The model, which rests on a careful assessment of the particular needs and resources in each school, minimizes costs and expenditures, in comparison to a pre-determined menu of activities applied to all schools regardless of needs. Very general estimates based on the budget figures for 2001 show annual investments of as little as \$6.75 per

student and \$310 per teacher. Again, it bears repeating that the standards on which investments are made are those of the Ministry and not of an external multinational firm.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The conclusions and recommendations revolve around two themes. First, efforts to replicate the model and carry the benefits to other public schools are strongly justified. The school sponsorship program of the Falconbridge Foundation has produced impressive results, recognized and appreciated by the broad array of stakeholders within the local school community, the regional community, the teachers' union, and the Ministry of Education. Recognizing that the model continues to evolve, the Foundation experience to date provides an invaluable guide for program development. The combination of independence and accountability for the Foundation, the attention to each school as unique, and the approach to the school community as a partner are central characteristics of this model.

The second theme focuses directly on the issue of the quality of the education received by the students. The recommendation offered that the academic aspect of the sponsorship program be a key focus of direct attention in the future. Recognizing the importance of improvements in the school climate and building as the context for learning, next steps might include (1) additional classroom technical assistance or teaching teams to support teachers in applying the new teaching methods presented in the training; (2) annual or semi-annual student testing, with particular attention to engaging the parent association in reviewing the results and pressuring for improved quality; and (3) the maintenance of a database for each school so that changes in performance can be monitored and assessed.

A final recommendation encourages the Foundation to build on its strength by pushing even further in developing the base of community responsibility and commitment to the school and its management. The *Plan Decenal* and the Education Law call for decentralization of school administration, and the community development approach of the Foundation over time provides the local school community with the tools to fill this role.



## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

The Task Order for the evaluation of the Falconbridge Foundation School Sponsorship Program emerged from several converging sets of interests. As a potentially successful example of private sector support for basic education, USAID/Washington is interested in knowing more about how the program operates from the point of view of resources, cost effectiveness, and impact. Are there lessons to be drawn from this experience for applications regionally and globally?

For the USAID mission in the Dominican Republic (USAID/DR), the evaluation is intended to first, assess and document the achievements of the sponsorship program, and second to identify and discuss key considerations in replicating the model in other regions of the Dominican Republic. The model is particularly interesting because it seeks to increase the value of the traditional public education system rather than creating an alternative system. If the evaluation were positive, the report should provide the basis for later program design in line with the new USAID public/private partnership initiative, the Global Development Alliance. The Falconbridge Foundation itself sought the evaluation as well. The Foundation wants an outside evaluation to assess the program in terms of its educational objectives, and to provide feedback and recommendations on how to make the program more effective in improving the quality of education in the schools.

The Scope of Work for the Task Order, prepared by USAID/DR, states the rationale for the study in the following terms:

*In the Dominican Republic, a major constraint to sustained economic growth is the lack of quality education. Dominican education lags behind that of other countries with similar economic conditions...USAID/DR feels there is a need to restore and build civil society commitment to improving public education, to increase public and private expenditure in educational improvement, and to strengthen the participation of families and communities in the entire educational process....*

Through its Education strategy, USAID/DR seeks to assist the private business sector in linking up with communities in order to improve basic education. USAID/DR wishes to explore a school sponsorship model that will tie in with the *Competitiveness of Dominican Enterprise* Intermediate Result that is a part of the Economic Growth Strategic Objective, together with *Improved Basic Education*.

USAID/DR's interest in evaluating the Falconbridge Foundation school sponsorship experience lies in documenting a probable success story where a public/private partnership has resulted in the improvement of education for a considerable number of students in the public school system.

If the foundation has indeed achieved the above improvements as compared to similar schools in the public educational system, the following remain to be determined:

1. What is the “model”?
2. Is it replicable in other parts of the country and the rest of the world?
3. Can it be successfully replicated with reasonable investment?
4. What is the cost-effectiveness of the Falconbridge project?
5. What are the impact and cost-effectiveness of each of the unique interventions in the Falconbridge schools?
6. Can the model function with more than one sponsoring entity at a time?

In summary, the purpose of the evaluation is two-fold:

- First, the team was asked to provide an objective assessment of the Falconbridge Foundation school sponsorship model and its achievements over the last decade. The guidelines for the assessment in the Scope of Work focus on measuring the results of the Foundation program relative to its statement of objectives, with particular reference to the following elements: quality of education; access to education; and implementation of the Plan Decenal reforms for community participation, classroom innovation, student involvement in decision-making, and school-based management.
- Second, if the Foundation has achieved significant results through its model of school sponsorship, then the team was to identify the key components of the model, and assess the terms and constraints for replication of the model elsewhere. This aspect of the evaluation is of particular interest to the USAID mission in the Dominican Republic.

A complete Scope of Work is included in Appendix A.

## **B. Methodology**

The Scope of Work calls for use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, although the principal anchors for the study are of necessity provided by qualitative data. The Foundation has detailed files on its investments and activities since its inception in 1989, but it has no baseline information on indicators of educational quality (including number of students, attendance records, promotion/repetition rates, ratio of boys and girls, desertion rates, and standardized test scores), and data from the Ministry of Education are of questionable reliability.

The qualitative methods include document review and interviews with representatives of key stakeholder institutions, especially in the Foundation and the Ministry. Interviews also were held with representatives of international donor organizations, the teachers’ union, and individuals associated with other school sponsorship projects. The bulk of the qualitative data were collected from visits to 24 of the Foundation-sponsored schools, selected to cover both provinces where the Foundation has programs, schools in rural, peri-urban and urban areas, and schools with varying lengths of affiliation with the program. The visits included classroom observation, interviews with school administrative personnel, and individual and group interviews with parents and students. In each school, the team observed at a minimum, a preschool class, a third grade class, and an eighth grade class. In addition, the team visited 6 public schools that are not

sponsored. Team members also observed a session of Foundation-sponsored training, and attended a weekly meeting of a community women's association.

Protocols for the interviews and for the classroom observations are found in Appendix B. Lists of schools visited and individuals interviewed are included in Appendices C and D respectively.

Three sources of quantitative data were tapped for the evaluation. First, the Statistics Department of the Ministry of Education provided year 2000 enrollment data for all schools in the region in which the Foundation is working. Second, the team acquired from the Ministry the database for the Eighth Grade National Tests for the year 2000, including individual level scores for all eighth graders in the country, in both public and private schools. (The analysis of these data is summarized in Section III C of this report and presented in greater detail in Appendix E). Third, the BEPS task order supported the administration of UNESCO standardized tests in Spanish and math, by the UNESCO Latin American Education Evaluation Laboratory. The tests were administered to a sample of third graders in Foundation-sponsored schools and a control group in non-sponsored schools. The results of the analysis of these scores will be appended to this report when UNESCO has completed it.

### **C. Organization of the Report**

The following section of the report sets the context for the Falconbridge Foundation school sponsorship program in terms of the situation of provision of basic education in the Dominican Republic, and measures underway for reform. It also presents an overview of the sponsorship program and how it fits into the community development initiatives of the Falconbridge Foundation.

The third section presents the analysis of the data and findings. The school sponsorship program is keyed to the local public school. This section focuses first on the results of the observation and interviews in the schools, from the point of view of (A) the school community, and (B) the school and classroom as an education institution. Part C compares academic achievement in sponsored and non-sponsored schools using data from the national exams. Part D examines the role of the Foundation as an implementing organization operating in the nexus between the private sector firm and the public school system.

Drawing on the analysis of the components of the Foundation program and their contribution to the results, Section IV abstracts from this experience to draw out considerations and issues in replicating the model. Section V provides summary conclusions and recommendations directed to the Foundation.

## D. A Note on Terminology

Some of the terminology used in the report may be confusing for readers not familiar with the Dominican Republic. Explanations are provided below.

### Terminology

The term **Foundation** is used to refer to the Falconbridge Foundation, to avoid confusion with Falconbridge Dominicana, the private sector firm that created and funds the Foundation. This distinction is made by residents in the region as well as by the Foundation staff. Schools that are sponsored by the Falconbridge Foundation are referred to as Foundation schools or sponsored schools.

The name of the program in Spanish is *Apadrinamiento de Escuelas*, which refers to “the state of becoming or being a godparent for schools.” The term was selected to show that the private sector firm does not take on the role of parent of the public school; this role remains with the Ministry of Education. The godparent supports the school in its relationship with the parent. For this reason, the name of the program has been translated in English as school **sponsorship**, in preference to the more common concept of “adopt a school.”

The government entity known as the Ministry of Education or the Department of Education in most other countries is officially called the *Secretaría de Educación* (Secretariat of Education), in the Dominican Republic, and the Minister of Education is referred to as the Secretary of State for Education. (To further confuse matters, the current Secretary of Education is also the Vice President of the country.) In both written documents and in conversations, Dominicans use the terms **Ministry of Education** and **Minister of Education** interchangeably with Secretary and Secretariat. The convention in English is to refer to the Ministry of Education.

The Falconbridge Foundation school sponsorship program operates in two provinces of the country--Monseñor Nouel and La Vega. These provinces are commonly referred to by their principal cities, Bonao, in the case of Monseñor Nouel, and La Vega, in the case of La Vega. Bonao also is the location of the Falconbridge Dominicana operation and the field office of the Foundation. In this report, **Bonao** is often used to refer to the province of Monseñor Nouel.

The Education Districts of the Ministry of Education are not contiguous with the provinces, but two of the districts are called Bonao and La Vega. In the report, on the few occasions when specific reference is made to Education Districts rather than to the provinces, the terms **Bonao District** or **La Vega District** are used.

The term in Spanish, *Plan Decenal*, is used to refer to the ten-year program for educational reform adopted by the government in 1992 (and funded in large part by loans from the InterAmerican Development Bank and the World Bank). The full name of the plan in Spanish is *Plan Decenal de Educación*.

In the Dominican Republic, the local school administrator referred to in the United States as the principal is called the school director. The term **director** is used in this report to refer to this position in the school. If the school building has sessions in the morning, afternoon, and evening, each session may have a different director. In the schools visited for this study, all schools had the same director for the morning and afternoon sessions, but the evening sessions always had a different director. In most cases, the evening sessions were for secondary rather than primary students.

## II. THE SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM: THE CONTEXT

### A. Education Reform in the Dominican Republic

The Falconbridge Foundation school sponsorship program started and evolved in parallel to the education reform efforts taking place in the Dominican Republic since the early 1990s. In many ways, the Foundation program carries out the educational innovations proposed by the reform and the new education law (*Ley General de Educación*) ahead of the rest of the country. In addition, the Foundation's program represents a private sector effort to assist the government in rebuilding a school system that had fallen into a ghastly state of neglect—dilapidated classrooms, untrained or poorly trained, unmotivated teachers, teacher and student absenteeism, practically nonexistent textbooks and teaching materials, and, above all, lack of a clear vision and sense of purpose for the national education system.

Like most Latin American countries, since the early 1990s the Dominican Republic has been engaged in a major effort to reform its educational system, seeking to expand access, increase social and gender equity, and improve the quality of school and out-of-school education. As in other countries, the education reform process has achieved mixed results, with some noteworthy advances and some serious shortfalls. Dominicans initiated the education reform movement confronted with heavy handicaps, the product of the disastrous deterioration of the school system during the 1980s, due in part, to the abysmal levels of government investment. The initiative for education reform emerged from the private sector in 1989, through their recently formed education policy group, EDUCA. The National Education Congress of 1991, a major consultative event on the state of public education and reform priorities, launched the ten-year education development plan (*Plan Decenal de Educación*), which set up an ambitious agenda for the expansion and strengthening of the educational system. The implementation of the first half of the *Plan Decenal* (called Emergency Phase) was financed with a \$44 million joint loan from the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank. This was followed by a \$102-million loan to finance the Basic Education Strengthening Program, Phase II for the period 1996-2001.

Among the achievements of the *Plan Decenal* is the enactment of the General Education Act (*Ley General de Educación No.66-97*) in April 1997, after an extensive period of consultation with the main stakeholders of the education sector throughout the country. This law includes most of the ingredients of a modern education system such as decentralized administration, flexible curriculum adaptable to local circumstances, standards for teacher qualification and working conditions, parent and community involvement, social and gender equity, and so on. The law also incorporates preschool education (*educación inicial*) as compulsory for five-year-old children, for the first time in the country's history. The law establishes the eight-year basic education level (divided into two, four-year cycles) as the minimum education right guaranteed by the government to all school-age children.

The implementation of the General Education Act and of the second half of the *Plan Decenal* has taken place within the context of a booming macroeconomy, with an outstanding 7.8 and 8.0 percent growth in GDP for 1999 and 2000 respectively, the highest in Latin America and one of the highest in the world. Closely linked to this economic growth is the major shift in economic

activity characterized by the stagnation of the agriculture sector and the dynamism of the manufacturing, tourism, commerce, transportation, telecommunications, and construction industries. Contradicting this rosy picture, the official unemployment rate remains stubbornly high at 13.9 percent in 2000, up from 13.8 percent in 1999, and inflation is just below 10 percent. Clearly, rural areas are benefiting the least from economic growth and suffering from the virtual collapse of sugar, coffee, and other agriculture commodities. Rural communities remain plagued by poverty, poor health, and limited access to education. Despite the improvements in the national economy, the government investment in education remains one of the lowest in Latin America at 2.1 percent of GDP, while the General Education Act mandates a minimum four percent of GDP investment in education and a minimum 16 percent of the total government expenditures.

Some improvements over the disastrous legacy of the past decades of neglect were achieved in the 1990s. Basic education enrollment rates increased from 67 percent in 1991 to 84 percent in 1999. Preschool enrollment increased from 14.7 percent in 1989 to 36 percent in 1999. The dropout rate decreased from over 23 percent at the beginning of the decade to fewer than 11 percent at the end of it. In contrast, high school enrollments have only modestly increased from 26 to 38 percent in the same period. Equity also improved during the decade. Five out of ten children ages seven to fourteen in the lowest income group of the population attended school in 1990, while seven out of ten did in 1997. The proportion of girls and boys enrolled in the school system is essentially equal. The school breakfast program reportedly has been expanded to a large proportion of the schools. According to a recent assessment of the status of reform under the *Plan Decenal* based on interviews with key stakeholders,<sup>1</sup> the primary achievements include: increased enrollments in basic and preschool education; increased public awareness of the need to improve education; gains in teacher professionalism and salary increases; formulation of the new curriculum and the production of textbooks. Interestingly, although the Education Law is widely supported, there is a consensus that it has had no significant effect yet, because the lack of a regulatory framework for implementation of the law precludes its enforcement.

“We are in a calamitous situation” were the exact words that a high education Ministry official used in a meeting with the evaluation team. Observations and interviews of the evaluation team revealed that this statement was not an exaggeration. Many people interviewed said that the *Plan Decenal* is all but dead; the enthusiastic initial support achieved from all quarters of the society has given way to disappointment and cynicism regarding even a minimal achievement of its goals. State investment in education, which had significantly increased in the late 1990s, has begun to stagnate. The Ministry budget covers primarily teacher and administrator salaries, with other expenditures such as textbooks, teacher training, school breakfast, and classroom repair and maintenance covered from external sources, mainly the Banks’ loan. Surprisingly, the IDB/World Bank loan funds remain significantly under-executed, a fact that speaks to the management weaknesses of the Ministry. The School Infrastructure component, the largest in the Bank program, is the most under-executed at over 60 percent below target. The ambitious school expansion, classroom repair, and preventive maintenance through funding of parent associations have not reached any of the non-sponsored schools visited by the team in the Bonao and La Vega districts. Ministry officials admitted a drastic shortage of classroom space and overcrowded conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Sanguinetti, Jorge A., and Jorge Max Fernandez. “The Future of Education in the Dominican Republic: Opportunities and Challenges.” Prepared by DevTech Systems, Inc. for USAID/Dominican Republic. Oct 2000.

Recent reports as well as informants for the evaluation team agree that the reform process has not improved the quality of classroom instruction. Teachers are being assisted to pursue qualifying studies but the training institutions – normal schools and universities – are behind in their own knowledge of contemporary teaching methodologies and do not have the capabilities to provide the training required by the reformed curriculum. In addition, it is widely acknowledged that teachers' morale is low and they lack the motivation to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers are frequently absent from their schools and when present neglect their work and their pupils. The government has been unable to reach a working relation with the Dominican Teachers Association, ADP the teachers' union, despite a common political party allegiance, and strikes are becoming increasingly frequent. Regarding teaching materials, the government has invested heavily in the massive production of textbooks for the basic and high school students. However, frequent breakdowns in the distribution system have resulted in long delays, with books at times reaching the students in the middle or end of the school year. Teaching aids such as posters, maps, charts, chalk, and chalkboards are rarely reaching the schools. Curiously, the previous administration undertook massive purchases of computers that were distributed and installed in Computer Centers at various locations in the country. These computer centers remain locked and unused in most locations for lack of teachers trained to manage them or absence of adequate supply of electricity, a problem affecting a large proportion of the schools.

The administrative decentralization promised in the *Plan Decenal* and mandated in the Education Law remains unrealized in most, if not all, of its components. Teacher hiring and firing is centrally managed, as are the purchase and distribution of supplies. None of the civil society participation mechanisms at the regional and local levels have been developed. The central offices of the Ministry continue to have a monopoly over all decisions regarding the management of the education system.

Assessment of student academic achievement has been a serious problem both in terms of national test design and administration and security of the text. An illustration of the gravity of this problem occurred during the drafting of this report with the indictment of an official of the Ministry's National Testing Office accused of trafficking national tests. Well before this incident, interviewees expressed serious doubts about the reliability of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade tests. The evaluation team also was surprised to hear reports of close to 100 percent promotion based on the tests at all the schools visited, both sponsored and non-sponsored. In 1997, the UNESCO Latin American Education Evaluation Laboratory applied a standardized test to 4<sup>th</sup> year students in math and Spanish in several Latin America countries. In this case, when a student achievement test was applied in a reliable fashion, Dominican students scored lower than those in all but one other country.

The shortfalls of the education reform mentioned above (i.e., physical plant deterioration, poor quality of teacher training and teacher motivation, low quality classroom instruction, lack of parent and community involvement, and centralized system management accompanied by weak school administration) are exactly the areas of intervention assumed by the Falconbridge Foundation school sponsorship program. The Foundation's successful experience seems to point a way for achieving school system reform through a cooperative partnership between the government and the private sector.



## B. The Falconbridge Foundation Program

The Falconbridge Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 1989, to promote integrated and sustainable community development in the areas where the Canadian mining firm, Falconbridge Dominicana, has been mining and refining nickel since the mid-1960s. The Foundation's largest program is the school sponsorship program (apadrinamiento), which began in June 1990, but the Foundation also carries out cultural, health, and environmental programs in Bonao<sup>2</sup> (the company headquarters) and the surrounding rural communities. The work of the Foundation is supported almost entirely by annual budget allocations from Falconbridge Dominicana, the branch of the company in the Dominican Republic. It also has received several small grants for specific activities from donor organizations.

Falconbridge Dominicana had a stormy history in the Bonao area, characterized by labor unrest and strong opposition from the community. The company's decision to form a Foundation and make a long-term commitment to development activities came after other failed attempts to improve the relations with the community and avoid the strikes and violent demonstrations that had plagued its operations. Over the years, Falconbridge Dominicana had made donations to a variety of community activities, but its giving had minimal effect on its problems there. The residents had the expectation that they were "owed" this charity by the company, and ironically, more unrest simply brought more donations.

The Falconbridge Foundation operates in the region where Falconbridge Dominicana plant is located, but its commitment is to the community first, rather than to the company and its employees. Importantly, assistance from the Falconbridge Foundation carries with it the

<sup>2</sup> Bonao is the name of the central city in the province of Monseñor Nouel.



obligation for community involvement. No assistance is given without a petition from the community, and participation in Foundation programs involves responsibilities as well as benefits. The Foundation clearly sees its goal as long-term development rather than charity.

The ten-member Board of Directors of the Foundation includes nationally influential individuals knowledgeable about community development, and four representatives of Falconbridge management. The President of the Board is the President and General Manager of Falconbridge Dominicana.<sup>3</sup> The Board meets four times annually, defining its role as providing policy direction for the Foundation and approving the annual work plan and budget. The Board is focused on the results of the program rather than on the operations. On several occasions, members have visited schools sponsored by the Foundation, but in general, they rely on the monthly financial and quarterly activity reports prepared by the Foundation staff and on their own observations about changes in community relations for the company.

The staff, then, has considerable independence in developing the program.<sup>4</sup> The Executive Director stresses the commitment of the Foundation and its staff to the communities. Within the general guidelines set by the Board, although the work of the Foundation benefits Falconbridge Dominicana, the needs of the communities rather than of the company determine the actions taken by the Foundation.<sup>5</sup> There are two caveats to this point. The communities closest to the mining and refining operations were prioritized by the company to receive the most services. Foundation activities that reach beyond the school sponsorship program (e.g., women's organizations, health, income generation) are focused on these communities. Secondly, while the Foundation has laid out clear criteria for prioritizing and selecting schools for sponsorship, the Foundation and the community have an implicit understanding that all public schools in the Monseñor Nouel province will participate eventually. In the neighboring province of La Vega, which was added to the school sponsorship program four years ago, only 50 of the 347 public schools in the province are to be sponsored.

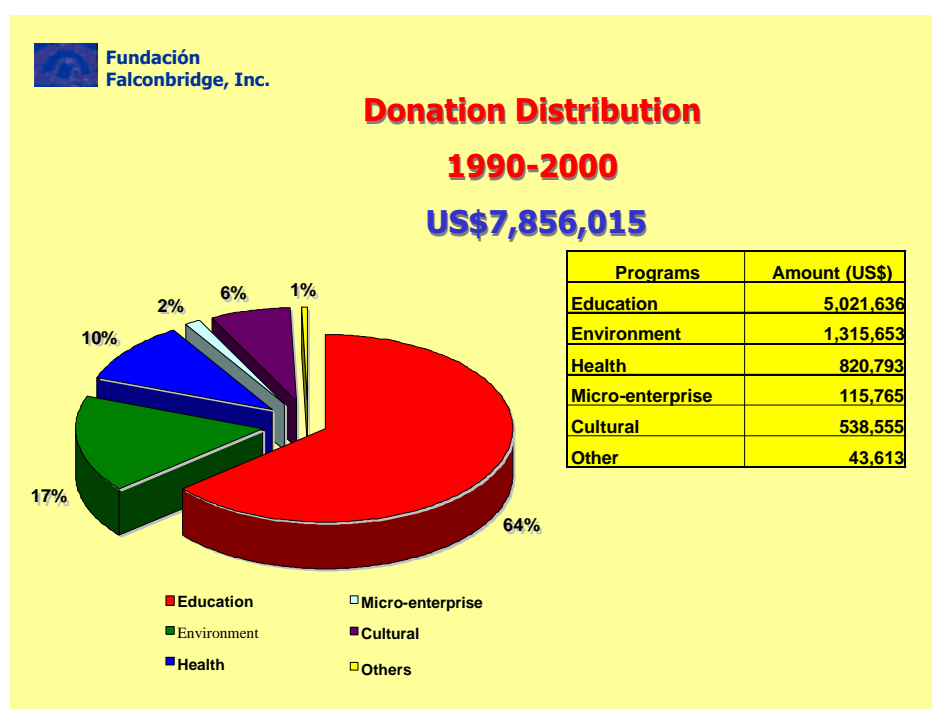
In its first decade of operation, between 1990 and 2000, the Falconbridge Foundation invested US\$7,856,015 in the communities. Nearly two-thirds of this amount (64 percent) went into education programs, which include the school sponsorship program and the scholarship program for higher education. Seventeen percent went to natural resource programs, which often are implemented in conjunction with the education programs, and include school gardens, tree nurseries, and tree planting. Community health, and income generation activities accounted for 12 percent. The remainder of the funds were invested in cultural activities at the community level, the most important of which are support for the School of Fine Arts in La Vega, a part of the public education system, and the *Plaza de la Cultura* in Bonao, which includes fine arts classes and an art museum.

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<sup>3</sup> The members of the Board are Enrique W. Lithgow, President, Hernando Brenes, Vice President, Bertrand De Windt, Treasurer, Rafael E. Caceres Rodriguez, Secretary, Eduardo Fernandez P., Ariel D. Perez, Monseñor Fransisco Jose Arnaiz, S.J., James H. Corrigan, John T.H. Clelland, and Tomas Pastoriza.

<sup>4</sup> The staff includes the Executive Director, Administrative Director, Director of Projects, Director of Communication and Programs, four central office support staff, and six field staff in Bonao, all of whom except the secretary are employees of the Ministry of Education seconded to the Foundation.

<sup>5</sup> A small indicator of this point is that very few of the schools have signs indicating that they are sponsored by the Foundation. The school itself is given the option of spending funds on a sign or on something else for the school.



### ***Focus on Education***

As the budget figures indicate, Foundation programs are grounded in education and support for the public schools. What is the basis for this decision? According to the community development specialist in the Foundation staff, when community residents are asked to list their priorities, they always cite housing, jobs/income, and health. For the Board and the staff, education and improvements in local schools are the key underlying factors in the poverty of the communities and the key to long-term community development, improved housing, jobs, and health. The Board focus on public education also reflects a strong private sector consensus that the quality of public education is the major social problem facing the Dominican Republic. The Foundation was formed at a time of significant civil society and business involvement (spearheaded by EDUCA)<sup>6</sup> in the vision of education reform embodied in the new education law and the *Plan Decenal*.

***School Sponsorship Program.*** The school sponsorship program is the single largest program of the Foundation and reaches the largest number of communities and people. The program was created to find an effective model for participation of the private sector in public education, and to support the national efforts for basic education reform. The Foundation activities are intended to complement the efforts of the Ministry of Education, and not to substitute for them. School sponsorship is focused entirely on community-level activities.

The Foundation began the school sponsorship program in one urban school in Bonao, Benito Rosario Alberto, in 1990. Two schools were added the following year, expanding to 60 schools in the districts of Bonao, Piedra Blanca and Maimón (Monseñor Nouel) by the end of the decade.

<sup>6</sup> EDUCA is an NGO formed in 1989 by the Dominican private sector to work on educational policy and reform. Between 1993 and 1997, it received support from USAID under the Private Initiatives in Primary Education project.

The program in the neighboring district of La Vega started in 1998, and now includes 40 schools. The Foundation operates only in public schools, which continue to be managed and staffed by the Ministry of Education. The Foundation does not buy land for schools, build schools, or pay any administrative costs or compensation to the faculty. With only a few exceptions, the sponsored schools are primary/elementary schools covering preschool through grade 8. There are 73,903 students in the 100 schools currently sponsored under the program (38,443 in Monseñor Nouel and 35,460 in La Vega).

The underlying objectives of the program have not changed since it began, but the components and procedures have developed over time, with experience. There is no reason to expect that this learning process has ended. The Foundation staff have modified and improved their model for school sponsorship as the number of schools has expanded. At the same time, within the schools, the needs and organization change as the program matures. The relationship with the school community and the level of investment are not the same with schools that have been in the program for one or two years and those that have worked with the Foundation for five or more years. As the program continues to mature, the model will grow.<sup>7</sup>

The school sponsorship program was designed in support of the broad goal of the Foundation to promote sustainable community development in the Bonao region. Within this goal and the stated purpose to support the reforms of the Ministry through a viable model for private sector involvement in education, the objectives of the program are:

- To improve the access and quality of education
- To improve the academic achievement of the students
- To reduce the number of school leavers and overage students in the classrooms
- To contribute to an improved sense of civic responsibility among the students
- To encourage and support the participation of the parents in the activities of the school
- To support activities to increase the self-sufficiency of the school.

The components of the program (explained in more detail in the following section of the report) include:

- Repair and maintenance of the school building
- Provision of equipment and furniture for the school<sup>8</sup>
- Establishment of libraries
- Establishment of school gardens, and in some cases, tree nurseries
- Establishment of preschools
- Strengthening of the parent associations of the schools
- Formation and support of student councils
- Training of the school directors and teachers
- Support for cultural and sports activities
- School for parents

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<sup>7</sup> All of the schools that entered the program are still a part of it. The parent association of the first sponsored school actually made a donation back to the Foundation last year, in addition to seeking support on specific projects.

<sup>8</sup> The Foundation does not buy computers or photocopiers. It has placed televisions and VCRs in many of the schools.

The balance among these activities varies considerably from school to school, depending on need and the nature of requests from the school community. (Costs for training are constant across schools, as are costs for the equipping of the libraries.)

The school level planning and execution of activities also means that total expenditures vary by school, and that expenditures vary by year. The largest investments are made in the first two years due to the physical plant improvements and purchase of furniture. Between 1996 and 2001, the annual budget for the school sponsorship program in the Bonao district was approximately \$120,000 (an average of \$2000 per school); for La Vega, after an initial allocation of \$813,000, the budget for the 40 schools has been approximately \$250,000 per year. The higher budget in La Vega reflects the larger average size of the schools, and the higher costs of the initial program years. (See Section III D.)

***Other Programs in Education.*** Other programs in education include the scholarship and adult education programs. Since 1990, the Foundation has supported a program of scholarships and loans for students from the region to attend university and technical and professional schools after high school graduation. To date, between 800 and 900 students have benefited from these funds; about 90 percent of them are boys.<sup>9</sup> Eligibility is based on academic performance and need.

The adult education program in Bonao, which consists primarily of literacy training, is carried out in the Foundation sponsored schools. The parent association in the school must request literacy training; 20 potential students are required to put it in place. The program is held for a limited time in a school, since a finite number of adults in each area need the service. After completing the literacy program, the adults may attend the night school at Escuela Manuel Aybar in Bonao for equivalent primary education. Interviews with parents in schools that have had literacy programs offered moving testimonials of the impact of these efforts.

In a few of the schools, most notably Benito Alberto, the first sponsored school, the Foundation also has organized classes for community women in skills for beautician, seamstress, and cook, which can serve as a basis for microenterprises.<sup>10</sup> These programs are very popular and support not only income generation but also community change. Many of the students in these classes are young women who have dropped out of school and are not attending secondary school.

Putting these adult programs in place has required organization on the part of the parent associations, technical assistance from Foundation staff, and, in many cases, additional Foundation investments in the school plant, for example in electricity. As is the case of other components of the Foundation education program, literacy and adult education are anticipated under the new education law, but the Ministry has not invested the resources to implement them.

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<sup>9</sup> Girls outnumber boys in high school graduation, but few of them benefit from this program because they are not interested in “non-traditional” technical fields. Girls choose to attend university rather than technical school.

<sup>10</sup> The training in the communities is only for women. They are the most interested, and the staff has observed that women are more likely than men to invest additional earnings in their families and to help keep their children in school. This observation has been confirmed by research in other countries as well.

### ***Community Development Programs***

The Foundation is working intensively in seven rural communities.<sup>11</sup> As in the school sponsorship program, the community development activities begin with a request from the community, followed by a diagnostic of community necessities, strengths, and weaknesses. The facilitator who conducts the diagnostic uses rapid rural appraisal and participatory methods. An important part of the process is to have the community recognize that residents must collaborate in the effort. To counter the theme often voiced of “We’re so poor. Help us. There is nothing we can do,” the Foundation staff point out that they work only with poor communities, but with poor communities that come together to draw up a plan for moving forward. The Foundation supports them in carrying out their plans. The program involves support for institutional and association strengthening, especially women’s organizations.

#### **Los Palmaritos**

The Falconbridge Foundation has been working with the Women’s Club of Palmarito since the early 1990s. The club started in 1975. It now has 52 members, some of whom are mother/daughter pairs that have grown up with the organization. It meets weekly in a one-room building funded by the Foundation. The Foundation first came in contact with the Women’s Club through school sponsorship activities in the early 1990s. At that time, the community was so conflictive and anti-Falconbridge that the Executive Director could not enter unless she was accompanied by individuals from the community.

The activities of the Club are defined by the three primary needs cited by the women: health, housing, and income. In 1994, the Foundation provided \$30,000RD in a rotating fund to make small loans to the women for microenterprise development. Working with technical assistance from ADEMI (the Dominican Microenterprise Association), the fund has grown and is now loaning out more than RD\$350,000. It is entirely self-managed by a committee of five women in the Club. The Club also has a program of community health aides, who are women trained in first aid and primary health care. They keep first aid equipment, and recently completed an immunization campaign in the community. The members are most proud of their aplomb in successfully pressuring municipal authorities for paved roads, electricity, and water in the community.

The women who are active in the Club are also the leaders of the parent association of the school. (The board of the association is all women.) The issues of the two groups overlap. In the school setting, the women are currently pressuring to fill an empty teaching slot and to get a nurse for the school. The school does not have a permanent director. The preschool teacher, with eight years of tenure at the school, has been acting director for the entire school year, because the parents have rejected other candidates.

The Foundation continues to meet with the Club in Palmaritos occasionally, offering intermittent technical assistance and responding to petitions. It is essentially self-sufficient.

The relationship between the community and school programs varies. In two of the seven communities, the Foundation entered the community through a request for school sponsorship, and expanded its support from there. In the others, the community had strong leaders who were not involved in the schools, and school sponsorship followed the development of other activities. The community programs, like the school programs, change in character over time. As the community associations become stronger, the Foundation gradually withdraws from active involvement, with only intermittent follow up.

<sup>11</sup> The Foundation is not able to do community programs in urban neighborhoods. The budget for these programs (approximately US\$130,000 per year) is not large enough to have an impact in urban areas. The work with the seven communities involves an integrated set of programs including health, conflict resolution and curbing violence, natural resource management, agriculture, microenterprise development, and school sponsorship.

***Community Response***

The Foundation was founded by Falconbridge Dominicana to build rapport with the community of which it is a part. The company hoped to mine in the area for more than 50 years, a prospect made difficult by community resistance and violence. In these terms, the Foundation programs (and the passage of time) apparently have achieved their purpose. Bonao retains its reputation as a hotbed of community resistance, but demonstrations and violence directed at the company and its employees are no longer a constant threat. The evaluation team traveled freely throughout the region accompanied by Foundation staff and were received warmly on all sides.

### III. FINDINGS

At the core of the Falconbridge Foundation education program is the improvement of the quality of education that takes place in the schools. All interventions—physical plant improvements, provision of teaching materials and equipment, professional development, establishing libraries, and increased community involvement—are geared to that end.

This section addresses the question of whether and how well the program is achieving these objectives. It is in four parts. Part A addresses objectives tied to the way the Foundation approaches its task, in a collaborative effort with “the school community,” including the faculty, students, parents, and community at large. Part B focuses on the school and the classroom as the focus for implementation of the program. Part C provides a test of compliance with the objectives in terms of student achievement. Part D of this section is not tied directly back to the objectives, but rather examines the organizational model used by the Foundation as a base for understanding how the observed results were achieved and as a lead into the final section on replication. The examination of the organizational model and potential for replication are of particular interest to the USAID Mission in Santo Domingo.

#### A. The School Community

The Foundation identifies encouragement and support of parents in the school as one of its key objectives. Parental involvement is linked not only to maintaining the school infrastructure and increasing the self-sufficiency of the school, but also to support for student attendance and achievement. Parents, students, and faculty together form the school community, the Foundation’s partner in its community-based program for school improvement.

The Falconbridge Foundation has set out a series of criteria for a school to be *apadrinada*, or sponsored. These are:

- It must be a public school located in the provinces of Monseñor Nouel or La Vega.
- It must have an active parent association (*Sociedad de Padres, Madres y Amigos*).
- The director and teachers must be willing to participate in training courses.
- The school community must provide counterpart in cash or kind for each request made to the Foundation.
- The school must create student councils to facilitate the participation of students.
- The school community must maintain the improvements made in the school building.
- The school community must work to make the school self-sufficient, in the medium term.
- The school community must foster creativity in solving the school’s problems.
- The school community must work toward improving the quality of education in the classrooms.

The emphasis in these criteria is on the active participation of the entire school community, and according to the staff, the Foundation model is most effective where all of the “community” parts are in place and working together. In this section, the focus is on the parents and students within this community. The Director is the lynchpin, serving as the mediator between the community and the Foundation.

The process for implementing these requirements is intended to show that the demand for community involvement is sincere. The process begins with a request from the community. The Foundation does not publicize the program or “recruit” schools to be a part of it. The initial request and all subsequent ones must be signed by both the school director and representatives of the parent association.<sup>12</sup>

The assessment of the appropriateness of the school for sponsorship has both formal and informal aspects. According to the Sponsorship Guide, after the Foundation receives the request, the school is given a questionnaire to fill out, *Datos de la Escuela*, which asks for basic information about school location, number of students and teachers, and composition of the parent association. It also requests information about the school building and assessment of the needs of the school in furniture and teaching materials. Following receipt of this information, if the school meets all of the prerequisites for inclusion, the Foundation Executive Director meets with the director, teachers, student representatives, and representatives of the parent association to explain the program, ways that the Foundation can help the school, and the obligations of the school community. The Executive Director signs a letter with the school director and the parent association that spells out what each agrees to do in the sponsorship relationship.

Informally, the request is reviewed first with the Foundation field supervisors in Bonao and La Vega, who have visited the schools and know the directors and the teachers, and their level of commitment. In addition, they visit the community to get a sense from the parents and others of their support for the school. Other informal factors also play a role. For example, in Bonao, priorities were set for when schools entered the program. Important factors have been the location of the school (affecting ease of supervision), and number of students. The remaining schools in Bonao are essentially small, often remote rural schools.<sup>13</sup> Also, the Foundation will repair but not build a school. One of the schools visited that is not sponsored is located in a decrepit community center, and the Ministry has not yet agreed to construct the new school. At this point, all the Foundation can do is support the community’s request to the Ministry.

In La Vega on the other hand, where only a total of 50 schools will be admitted to the program, number of students as well as location and ease of supervision are considerations. To maximize the impact of the program in La Vega, in general, the Foundation has sponsored primarily large, urban schools in impoverished neighborhoods.

The Guide to Sponsorship says that after the letter of agreement is signed, the school community is asked to list the needs of the school, in order of priority. An engineer<sup>14</sup> then visits the school to assess the extent and cost of the repairs to the building. The budget is reviewed, and the school is informed in writing of what work is to be done. The Foundation purchases materials and contracts a builder, and the work commences. When the repair work is complete, the

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<sup>12</sup> By June, the Foundation already had 150 requests for next year. The program began with one school, Benito Alberto, in Bonao. From that point forward, according to Foundation staff, the criteria for gaining sponsorship have been understood widely in the region. The Foundation recently prepared a “Guide for School Sponsorship” (*Guía para la aplicación al Programa de Apadrinamiento de Escuelas*;) to stimulate participation of the entire community, especially parents.

<sup>13</sup> According to Foundation staff, even these schools have felt the impact of the sponsorship program because the faculty has been invited to and participated in training.

<sup>14</sup> The engineer comes from Falconbridge Dominicana, with his time donated by the company.



director and parent association must formally accept the work, in writing, before it is cleared by the engineer.

This process, both formal and informal, is built around the parents, students, and faculty of the school. The interviews with the parent associations and the student councils demonstrated its importance. Having members of the school community sign an agreement with the Foundation, asking them to prioritize the needs of the school and to certify their acceptance of the work that has been done, demonstrates respect and the expectation of a partnership. For the parent association, it also can be empowering.

### ***Report from the Parents***

For the evaluation, representatives of the parent association were interviewed in nearly all of the sponsored schools visited. (See Appendix C for the complete list.) The questions centered on the parents' perception of the sponsorship experience, their understanding of their involvement, and plans for the future.

***Overview.*** While all schools have a parent association, as required, and most directors report that one existed before the sponsorship, clear differences exist in the leadership and cohesiveness of the groups and their level of involvement. To some extent, each school is unique, but in broad terms, the differences reflect the nature of the community and the guidance of the school director. The relationship between the school and the community is different in large urban schools than in rural communities. Peri-urban communities and poor urban barrios are often transient, without a sense of community identity. In some cases the school seems to have pulled the community together; in others, it has not. In several places, the active members of the parent association are all women;<sup>15</sup> in most, both men and women participate, and the president is usually a man.

In all cases, the representatives interviewed clearly articulated the role of the parent association in the sponsorship relationship in terms of solicitations. Most also spoke of their responsibilities in maintenance. The president of a particularly active association said, "It is our responsibility to give value to the donations from the Foundation." All were eager to report the benefits of sponsorship for their school. In most cases, they did not hesitate in listing specific projects and benefits for the school and the association.

***Assessment of Sponsorship.*** In describing the benefits, two general characteristics were listed more than others: security, and appearance and cleanliness. In these communities, virtually all parent groups cited having a fence or a wall around the school, with a person to regulate who enters, as the key improvement with sponsorship. The parents talked about past problems of vandalism, drugs, men hanging out in the schools at night, boys coming to bother the girls, and violence in the community spilling over to the school grounds.

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<sup>15</sup> Households headed by women tend to predominate in transient, poor communities. Building a strong parents' association in these communities involves not only the problem of high turnover among members, but also issues related to gender, and the need to build a sense of assertiveness and empowerment. A parents' association that brings the women together and builds their confidence could become an important tool for community cohesion.

In many communities, the school appearance is a source of pride for the parents, and active parent associations discuss their efforts to support the faculty and the students in cleaning and repair. One mother said that the order and good hygiene in the school carry over to the children's behavior at home. Another said that, "As a mother, it makes me proud to go to the school and see my daughter sitting there at a desk in a nice room that is clean and pleasant." In a small, cohesive, rural community that recently entered the program, the president of the parent association described the school as part of the patrimony of the community.<sup>16</sup>

In some cases, the sense of pride among the parents extends beyond appearance. Many referred to their school as the best in the area. It attracts children from outside the immediate community. Their children like coming to the school, and they are less likely to drop out. They mentioned the preschool as a particular draw for students. For those who were active in the school before sponsorship and could talk about the before and after changes, some mentioned the change in the attitudes and preparation of the teachers, changes in the disciplining of students, and the increased variety of activities. These responses were given less often than the more general statements about security and appearance, often with probing.

#### Two Examples of the School Community

The first school that was sponsored in Bonao, beginning in 1990, is interesting because it suggests the potential progression of the program within the community. Both the director and the parents spoke about the way Foundation sponsorship has changed not only the school but also the community. The parents are more involved with the school, and the school, the teachers, and the director play a greater role in the community. The community is more united. There is less illiteracy, and more income (because of the Foundation-sponsored training programs for women). People are more responsive to requests from the school; the community and the school act together. According to the parents, the association remains strong and active, with sub-committees of parents responsible for various types of activities. The association has expanded into new areas, like health programs for the students.

In a very poor, transient peri-urban barrio, the new school, which was built by the Ministry in 1993, has more or less defined the community as a place. Because of frequent flooding, the community is supposed to be moved to a new location. The parent association, with support from the Foundation, is asking that a new school be built in the new location so that, in the future, the floods will not affect the children and the school calendar.

#### *Activities and Structure of the Parent Associations*

The association activities described by the parents and the organizational structure of the associations are similar across schools. In most cases, the officers (*junta directiva*) meet monthly; more often, when necessary. Elections are held every one or two years; in many schools the same officers are elected for more than one term. The General Assembly of parents is held from one to four times a year, but most report that they meet twice—at the beginning and end of the school year. The primary focus of the officers is on fundraising for basic maintenance and supplies (cleaning supplies, paint, chalk, toilet paper). Perhaps the single most troublesome problem for the parent associations is repair of the bathrooms. In the small schools, the parent association often manages a school canteen. Both the parent who sells the items and the association gain income from this activity. (In the other schools, the canteen is rented out to an individual, who operates it as a private business.) In almost all associations, the parents talked

<sup>16</sup> Appearance was cited least often in the large urban schools, especially in the schools built during the 1950s, under Trujillo dictatorship (1930-1961).

about what they do in terms of basic maintenance for the school; in the less active organizations, one or two people usually do this work. In others, the association has organized community workdays.

An important role in many associations has been collaboration with the faculty in reducing violence and improving discipline in the school, often seen as serious problems in the schools, especially in Bonao. The associations described a system whereby the officers in the association meet with the parents of a child who is causing a problem in the school to inform them about the problem and look for ways to resolve it. In another scenario, the parents from the association join the teacher and director in meeting with the child's parents and the child. In one of these schools, in a marginal peri-urban setting, the director said that the work of the parents in the school had been supported by other efforts of the Foundation in the community to curb the violence, including women's organizations, and meetings with psychologists.

***Relationship of the Association to the Foundation.*** Responses to a question about the support the association had received from the Foundation varied, reflecting both the development of the association as an organization and the approach of the Foundation. In two rural communities in La Vega, which entered the program within the last two years, the members of the parent associations said that the associations and the parents are more active now than before because the Foundation has made it possible for them to actually accomplish some of their goals. In others, associations' members emphasized Foundation-sponsored talks about the relationship between the parents and the school, and assistance in organization (e.g., how to keep the financial accounts, take minutes in the meetings, hold elections, etc.). In two cases, the officers brought their books to the interview to demonstrate the records they keep.

The Foundation responds to approved requests from the schools with in-kind services only. Contractors hired to work on the schools are contracted and paid by the Foundation. None of the transactions with the parent associations involve cash transfers.<sup>17</sup> When questioned about this restrictive (and somewhat paternalistic) policy regarding cash transfers, the Foundation staff said that the policy has been gradually tightened, based on negative experience. In too many cases, cash transfers made early in the program to school directors, associations, and community groups were taken by individuals or used to manipulate contracts (e.g., kickbacks). The rationale is that the Foundation is investing its funds and wants to ensure that they are used properly for their intended purpose. The staff does not feel that these communities are capable at this point of handling this responsibility.

As an alternative course, the Foundation has done training for the parent associations and the student councils in fundraising, to assist them in developing their own resources. Most have activities to raise funds for minor repairs and supplies. In poor communities, however, local resources are limited, and the Foundation staff agree that for major expenses, outside sources have to be tapped.

***Relationship of the Association to the School Director.*** The interaction of the association and the director also varies. In the Foundation model, the director mediates the relationship between the Foundation and the school, but in some schools, the director leads the association, while in others, the interaction appears to be collaborative. In at least one school

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<sup>17</sup> There are occasional exceptions of cash transfers of \$5000 RD or less.

visited, the association was acting almost independently. The school had had only a temporary director for most of the school year because the community rejected the new appointees. In this case, the parent association is essentially an extension of a strong women's association that has been active in the community since 1975. (See text box on Palmarito, Section II.)

Some associations say that they make independent recommendations to the director for new solicitations to the Foundation. These groups are usually in communities with an existing base of organization. Others seem essentially to sign off on the director's requests. In a large urban school for example, the director said she informs the parents of the needs of the school at their monthly meetings. The parents come to the school only when they are invited. The representative of the parent association who was interviewed had little knowledge of the procedures for working with the Foundation. Three representatives of the parent association in another large urban school said the board has seven members, but it does not function as a group. Parents are reluctant to come to meetings, saying that education is the responsibility of the state. By contrast, in several associations, the members said the director, even more than the Foundation, had taken the lead in strengthening their organization and getting them involved in decisions about the school.

***Implications for Sustainability.*** The Foundation model states that ideally the school will be self-sustaining within five years, meaning that the parent association will assume responsibility for maintenance and repair. This objective has not been realized in any of the schools, and when asked about the future relationship to the schools, the President of the Foundation Board said that when you become a *padrino* (godparent) you are a *padrino* for life, implying a continuing responsibility. The Executive Director agreed that the difficulty in withdrawing from the school-based activities has become increasingly clear. For example, because of the weather in the region, the wooden doors have to be replaced every few years, a sizable expense. Natural disasters, especially floods and hurricanes, cause extensive damage that is usually not covered by the government. Even very active parent associations have insufficient funds for materials and labor.

All associations recognize maintenance and supplies as their responsibility, but they stand along a continuum in terms of the initiative they are willing to take in these tasks. Some parents talked about constant vigilance in looking for what needs to be done and then making the repairs; others focused on fundraising. In most of the schools, the activities of the parents as part of the school community revolve around a few individuals. If this leadership and commitment are lost, the character of parent involvement may change dramatically. The schools in which this dependence was not observed are those in which the school is an integral part of the community, and the community has an independent identity.

The responses to the hypothetical question, "What will you do when the Foundation program ends (i.e., when Falconbridge leaves the Dominican Republic)?" may give some indication of the associations' perception of sustainability. Representatives of the least active associations did not have an answer, probably as a reflection of their lack of involvement in the sponsorship process. In most associations, the response was, "We'd find another *padrino*," indicating a sense of responsibility toward the school, but also a dependence on the Foundation for funds and guidance. A few stated that they would have to seek funds elsewhere, indicating a sense of independence in terms of the initiative they would take. A few associations noted that they already are soliciting support from businesses in their communities.

### *Comparison to Other Experiences*

A more in-depth investigation of educational support from other groups could be prepared as a separate report, as this was not the primary objective of this report. However, to put the Falconbridge Foundation model in perspective, representatives of two other recent sponsorship experiences in the Dominican Republic also were interviewed. Both of these programs have ended. The managers of the programs point to the lack of community involvement as one of the key factors in explaining their short duration.

**Case I:** In 1993, the directors of an exclusive private school in Santo Domingo, Lux Mundi, sponsored a large public elementary school with monetary support from a local brewery. They worked with the school for three years, but say now they see no lasting results in the public school, although the students and teachers in the private school, who participated in the program as part of their *accion social*, benefited greatly from the experience.

In this case, the beer company repaired the school building and equipment; the private school contributed by working with the director, teachers, and parents. Initially, and most importantly, from their point of view, the director did not block their efforts in working with the teachers. They met with the teachers, talked about their needs, and developed a general assessment of the school. They provided new teaching materials and carried out a series of workshops with the teachers, as well as seminars for the parents on topics like health and nutrition. They also gave special classes for the students. Although they began working with the parents' association, they were unable to achieve significant community involvement. The director changed, politics intervened, and the program was unable to continue.

According to the women who were managing the program, the physical plant was improved, they personally learned a lot, but they were unable to institutionalize any of the other efforts. In their view, the key factors for successful sponsorship, based on this experience, are: the director; the school's desire for involvement, so that it is not just a donation; and involvement of the community.

**Case II:** From 1996 to 1999, CODETEL undertook sponsorship of a large public high school with a history of protest, centrally located in Santo Domingo. The school had approximately 4000 students in 1996, including morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. During the period of sponsorship, it grew by 500 students. According to the woman who managed the project for CODETEL, the initial step (and that of most interest to the company because of its visibility) was the repair and equipping of the building. She, on the other hand, pointed to the importance of working with the school community. (She praises the Executive Director of the Falconbridge Foundation as her mentor.) For example, she set up workshops with a psychiatrist to resolve the conflicts among the directors of the three different sessions. She worked with the students to form clubs, some of which continue today, and tried, with less positive results, to provide Internet training for the teachers. She said that she successfully organized the parents' association for one of the three sessions, but the sense that "CODETEL owed them," interfered with these efforts.

In retrospect, although the budget for the project was adequate, the former project manager feels it would have been more effective if it had been divided equally between training and the building. To this point, the school community appears to be maintaining the building, she has heard that some of the clubs continue, and she feels that the program was successful in less tangible ways like "giving the school back its pride." She felt that more could have been accomplished with more time, and with a clearer sense of the counterpart contributions of the school and of the Ministry of Education. The program was terminated by CODETEL when the project manager left the company.

Another indicator of steps toward sustainability is the attitude and relationship of the associations toward the government. Most associations voiced a sense of powerlessness *vis a vis* the bureaucracy, characteristic of marginal communities. Others adopted a more activist stance. The associations that talked about their active efforts to get various needs met by either the local government or the education Ministry seem to show an independence of action that goes beyond merely relying on the *padrino*. One association showed the letters they had written to the Ministry to get sports equipment for physical education classes; another said that they had petitioned the local police for someone to help the children cross the street at the beginning and end of the morning and afternoon sessions. They described commissions to government offices and the need for constant vigilance.

### ***Report from the Students***

Three one-year grants from the USAID Civic Education Project allowed the Foundation to move forward aggressively in its commitment to strengthen student participation in the school. The new Education Law called for the formation of student councils and spelled out the terms for their functioning. In the schools visited, the councils did not exist before they were formed with the support of the Foundation, and in general, they seem not to be operating in most other parts of the country except in schools participating in this project.

In general, the councils are made up of representatives of fifth through eighth grade. Each grade level also has a council, and the representatives to the school council are elected from the class councils. In most of the schools, elections are held near the beginning of the year, and students, teachers, parents, and the school directors frequently commented on the enthusiasm and preparation generated by the campaigns.

The student councils are guided by teachers, who received training for this purpose under the Civic Education Project. Student Council members were interviewed in six of the schools visited. In two other schools, one representative of the council participated in the meeting with the parents and community representatives, held on a Saturday. Representatives of the parent associations in many schools said they have had joint activities with the student councils.

The students interviewed were enthusiastic and articulate. They spoke with pride and seriousness about their achievements and responsibilities. The activities of the groups were similar across schools. All do fund raising. In one school, the students reported that they had used the funds to re-stock the school first aid kit; in another, they had collaborated with the parent association in repair of the toilets. Several councils said they had organized excursions for the students to museums or other points of interest, and many had a role in planning and executing special events for Mother's Day or Independence Day. Consistently, they talked about their responsibilities in assisting with discipline of the student body. In some cases, this responsibility involved active programs to change behavior; in others, they talked about serving as examples for their classmates. A second responsibility mentioned in nearly all cases was to assist in keeping the school clean and tidy. One student council had instituted a system of fines for students who litter.

The goal of the program has been to teach democracy by practicing it. It also seeks to reinforce the self-sufficiency of the school community by having the students play an active role in the school, and especially in maintenance and care. The students said that several from each council

were invited to attend courses and workshops with representatives of other schools to learn more about leadership, democratic values, etc. When they returned to their schools, they shared what they had learned with the other students. All of the student councils could articulate the lessons brought from their experience—to work in a group, respect others, to express their ideas. The conversations with the student groups spoke highly of the achievements of this program.

At the same time, it is important to state that, as in the case of the parent associations, not all of the student councils were functioning at the same level. In one large urban school, the students said the council had collapsed when the eighth graders left and had only recently been started again. In several schools, the parents had no information about the student activities. In general, the student councils seem to be less active in the large urban schools than in the rural schools (although some of the most active are in urban areas). The support of the director and the teachers appears to be a critical factor.

The Foundation is continuing this program even though the USAID grants have ended. In addition to the objectives for learning democratic principles through participation, one of the benefits the students themselves value highly from the experience is the opportunity to meet and interact with students from other schools. They talked about their experiences in the workshops, and exchanges and contests with other schools. The interaction seems to increase their identity and pride as a school and a community, but it also broadens their horizon. Exchanges of this type are clearly one of the benefits of the size of the Foundation program, in terms of number of schools sponsored.

This program involved training not only for the students but also for the teachers who work with the councils as “guides.” These teachers in turn are expected to train other teachers in their schools on the same principles. This model of training the teachers and of expanding the training within the corps of teachers throughout the district seems important to build sustainability into the student council as an organization, which would otherwise be even more vulnerable to turnover than the parent association.

### ***School for Parents (Escuela de Padres)***

During the past year, the Foundation has engaged in an experimental program to put into practice the *Escuela de Padres*, called for in the new Education Law. At this point, the program has been implemented in three schools only—two in Bonao (Los Amapolos and Caracol A), and one in La Vega (Ramon Del Orbe). In the interviews, parents in all the schools were asked whether the program was operating in their school. In almost all cases, the parents were aware of the program; in several they showed the booklet they had received from the Ministry describing the program. On the other hand, the program was actually operating only in the three schools where it had been organized by the Foundation. In the others, the parents and/or director said the parent association lacked the funds to carry through on it, or they simply said they had not been able to organize it. In the two schools in Bonao, the parents also noted a problem with the electricity for classes at night. (In one of the two schools, the Foundation had installed a generator for the night school and the *Escuela de Padres*.) According to the Foundation Work Plan for 2001, the Foundation intends to assess the pilot experience and modify it as necessary to extend it to other schools.

For the present evaluation, the parents were asked only very cursory information about the experience. In all three cases, the parents who had attended were supportive of the effort, although the parents discussed the classes only in response to a direct question. In one of the three schools, a parent commented on the benefit of the classes with the psychologist on the topics of discipline, sex education, behavior of fathers. Seventy-five parents came at the beginning of the program (although it has declined since then). The classes were held every Wednesday for two hours. Based on these classes, the school decided to hold a sex education seminar for adolescents. In another school, the parent classes were held every Thursday. Fifteen to twenty-five parents attended each week. (This school has more than 2000 students, meaning that the representation was not large.) In the third school, the parents said that attendance was a problem initially, so the hour was changed from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. The new time, however, also was a problem because it occurred at the same time as the evening session in the building, and one of the parents (a woman) said she is uncomfortable walking home from the school in the dark. The director said 30 to 60 parents were attending.

From these experiences it seems clear that the school communities are not going to institute the School for Parents on their own, without assistance in organization, funding, and in some cases, electricity. While parents are very receptive to the topics covered in the classes, they do not have the organization or financial resources to follow through independently on the proposals contained in the pamphlet from the Ministry.

### *Discussion*

The Foundation was created to stimulate sustainable community development, and its model of school sponsorship is built around this goal. The individuals interviewed for the evaluation are members of the parent associations and, in a few cases, supportive community leaders. This format precluded discussions with individuals indifferent or opposed to the activities of the Foundation, and provided no basis for knowing whether or how widely these attitudes are found. The evaluation team moved freely around the region and Bonao. Given the reputation of Bonao as a center of protest and accountings of anti-Falconbridge activities at the initiation of the Foundation programs,<sup>18</sup> outright opposition seems minimal. All evidence points to the success of the Foundation in changing the relationship of the corporation to the community.

The Foundation has made a substantial investment in strengthening parent and student involvement in the schools. The investment has been in technical assistance and mode of operation, rather than in funds. Foundation field staff have a schedule whereby someone works in each school at least once every two weeks. The Executive Director spends at least two days a week in the region and reports that she personally visits at least five schools a week. Both parent and student groups reported that she had met with them to ask for input on the problems and needs of the school, an approach little practiced by government employees. Two points are

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<sup>18</sup> The Foundation was formed following a violent anti-Falconbridge demonstration in which two young people were killed. The Executive Director of the Foundation described how she had to be accompanied into some of the small communities when she started working in them, because of anti-Falconbridge sentiment. When the rehabilitation work on one of the sponsored schools was dedicated several years ago, the President of the Foundation (and manager of Falconbridge Dominicana) had to be accompanied by bodyguards and extensive security. Both the Executive Director and the Foundation personnel in the districts discussed the process of talking with, educating, and increasingly working with the individuals and groups that questioned the Foundation mission and commitment to the community. Opposition has been much less a factor in La Vega than in Bonao.



important here. First, the Foundation appears to practice what it preaches in terms of community involvement. Second, even though the program has expanded over the last decade from one to 100 schools, the approach remains individualized and direct.

Since parents and students were not interviewed in schools without sponsorship, no comparative assessment of the impact of these activities is possible. Parents and school directors in the sponsored schools were asked about the differences in their organization and activities before and after sponsorship. Examples of sustained community organization around the school, without the support of the Foundation were cited in only a few situations. The Foundation's investment in building this organization is essential to this model.

From the point of view of the parents, the most important factors in building their support for the school have been:

- *The repair, equipping, and improved appearance of the school building and grounds:* In all the interviews, this point was raised first. It provides a visible and clear indication of Foundation support and a clear and concrete task for them in maintaining it. The repairs provide security, space and desks, and a sense of pride. It gives credibility to the sponsorship program.
- *The school director:* In all the schools with an active, enthusiastic parent association, the parents praised the director and attributed the changes and success of the school to him/her. These are public schools, governed not by the community, but by the Ministry. The director is the representative of the Ministry and the link to it. A strong parent association may serve as a base for decentralization but not the catalyst.
- *The personal attention from the Foundation:* Many of the active parent groups commented on the responsiveness of the Foundation, and the staff presence and vigilance in their school. The parent groups feel they are taken seriously. They also appreciate the speakers and programs that the Foundation has arranged for them.

Within the context of the substantial accomplishments of the Foundation in developing the parent associations as key actors in the school community, several additional observations are offered:

- This component of the sponsorship program requires an extended commitment. The successes of the Foundation are dependent in large part on the hands-on, individualized approach to the school. Based on the interviews,<sup>19</sup> about a third of the parent associations are functioning extremely well. A few (less than a fourth), are relatively weak, meaning that two or three parents help out at the school, but the organization is moribund. Most associations fall somewhere between these two extremes – a few parents offer the

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<sup>19</sup> Clearly there were biases in the interviews because of the following: the evaluators visited most of the schools functioning well, and fewer of the weaker schools; because of confusion in scheduling, some of the parents who came to speak with the evaluators were not able to wait for the meeting to occur; it is more difficult to have parents present during the day in the urban schools than in the rural schools because they leave the area to work; and it is easier to contact women than men to talk to evaluators during the day.

leadership and an active presence in the school; the other members of the board, and of the parent body in general, are around when needed.

Yet, the picture we see now is only a snapshot. Because the students and parents move in and out of the school, and directors change, the character of the associations change over time. Putting an organizational structure in place that transcends these changes and building a culture of parent and community involvement in the school takes time, and points to the importance of attention to this component of the school sponsorship over time.<sup>20</sup>

For the active parent associations, the Foundation plays two important roles. First and foremost, it is a source of funds. Second, it can support the association in petitions to the Ministry. If the Ministry itself could create a fund to which parent associations could apply, the Foundation might gradually withdraw from the schools as the associations become increasingly independent. On the other hand, without an alternative funding source, at this point it seems likely that even the active parent associations would wither if the Foundation withdrew its support.

- The parents react to the school in terms of how it looks and operates rather than in terms of what or how much the children learn. When asked about the benefits of sponsorship, parents did not mention anything related to educational quality without probing. This lack of attention to the quality and achievement in part reflects the focus in the parents' interviews on their responsibilities *vis a vis* the Foundation,<sup>21</sup> but it also may point to need to build parental understanding and support for increasing their attention to what the children learn in the school. Again, this change is likely to evolve over time and to imply a cultural change to build community pressure for quality as well as quantity.
- For the Foundation, the parent associations are the key to sustainability of the benefits of sponsorship in the school, particularly in terms of the physical plant. Yet, these associations have very few funds with which to accomplish these tasks, and the Foundation gives them no funds directly. Ultimately, for the associations to function independently, they will have to have control over money, with the power to decide how it is spent.
- The Foundation currently is sponsoring 100 schools, and within the next few years the total will reach about 120. The staff feel that with this number of schools they will be nearing their capacity to provide the direct individualized attention that has characterized the program to date.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, there are benefits from the sponsorship of multiple schools. The students, in particular, but also the parents, appreciate the inter-school events and training among the Foundation schools. The large number of schools

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<sup>20</sup> Two additional observations support this generalization. First, overall, the parents' associations in La Vega were more "activist" than those in Bonaó, probably because the experience is newer for them, and in most cases, they are still involved with changes in the physical plant. Second, directors in particularly transient poor communities and neighborhoods mentioned the movement in the community as a deterrent in strengthening the parent association.

<sup>21</sup> Clearly, it also could reflect the way the question about the impact of sponsorship was asked.

<sup>22</sup> With time the amount of oversight provided by the field staff decreases, but the staff continues to give support to the faculty, to follow up on training lessons, and to the parents and students, particularly because of the civic Education Project and the new Ethics Program.

in each district also provides the scale needed to fill the training sessions for directors and teachers, and to allow the Foundation to invest in premier trainers.

- The positive results of the work done in the formation and training of student councils are evident in the enthusiasm and competence of these student leaders. The experience with the Civic Education Project, which provided funding for this work, illustrates a corollary benefit of the sponsorship program. By filling the fundamental gaps found in the public schools in terms of infrastructure and basic organization, the Foundation sponsorship has provided a base these additional experiences. It is unlikely that this type of program could function effectively in many non-sponsored public schools.
- The experiences with the student councils and the School for Parents, which are entities spelled out in the new education law, demonstrate the resources required to turn the vision of the new law into a reality. These activities, which seem to require on-site technical assistance, training, and money to organize them, may be particularly amenable to a sponsorship relationship.

## B. The School and the Classroom

In this section, attention shifts from the community to the school itself. Data were drawn from interviews with the administrators and teachers, review of school records, tours of the school facilities, and classroom observation. All interviewees agreed that sponsored schools are offering a better learning environment and, as a result, a higher quality education than the non-sponsored schools. At the same time, the team found that there is room for improvement in a number of areas within the sponsored schools. The following chart presents a summary of the team findings comparing Foundation-sponsored and non-sponsored schools.

### Summary Comparisons Between Foundation-sponsored and Non-sponsored Schools

Topic	Foundation-sponsored	Non-sponsored
1. Physical Plant	Refurbished building and grounds, comfortable classrooms, running water, and sanitation facilities. Sufficient seating for students and teachers.	Dilapidated building, grubby and neglected grounds, broken-down water and sanitation facilities, and classrooms in disrepair. Insufficient seating for students and teachers.
2. Classroom Instruction	Mainly through 'talk and chalk' except at preschool classes. At most schools observed, teachers did not prepare teaching aids and made little use of teaching aids provided by Falconbridge.	Dilapidated blackboards and chalk often purchase by teachers or parents as sole classroom activity.
3. Teaching Method	Despite generalized adherence to constructivist learning, teacher-centered approach prevails at most schools. Few attempt inquiry-based learning and teamwork. Some individual project work in natural and social sciences on special occasions.	No major attempts at inquiry learning evident. Any innovation hampered by lack of resources and limited infrastructure.
4. Learning Assessment and Evaluation	Limited, mainly oral review from teacher to students during class.	None observed during class. Written

	Written semester and end-of-year exams. Variety and innovation required.	semester and end-of-year exams.
5. Preschool Education	One of the best features of the program. Trained teachers conduct creative teaching (with few exceptions). Classrooms well supplied with teaching aids and appropriate furniture. Ample availability of work materials for children.	Poorly furnished and limited availability of didactic materials.
6. Learning Resources	Variety of didactic materials and reference texts provided to most schools. Response to special needs from individual schools.	Sporadically provided from Ministry central level. Severe shortage.
7. School Library	Available at all schools visited. Some with limited space and furniture.	Not available at any of the schools visited.
8. Student Textbooks and Teacher Guides	Provided by the Ministry	Provided by the Ministry.
9. Audio-visual Equipment	Some provided to most schools, e.g. TV, VHS, radio/tape recorder, microscope, etc.	Not available at any school visited.
10. School Director	Displays commitment to school progress. Most expressed positive, enthusiastic disposition. Exercises strong leadership.	Displays commitment to school progress. Pessimistic disposition. Weakened leadership.
11. School Records	Manually kept. Some need to improve timeliness and accuracy.	Manually kept. All seen required updating and improved accuracy.
12. Teacher Training	Balance of personal and professional development. Highly appreciated by teacher. Support to complete higher education.	Subject matter teaching only. Mainly perceived as obligation. Support to complete higher education.
13. Teacher Qualifications	Few with high school only. Most with Normal School qualification ( <i>profesorado</i> ). Few with degrees (Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education).	Few with high school only. Most with Normal School qualification ( <i>profesorado</i> ). Few with degrees (Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education)
14. Teacher Attendance and Apparent Motivation	High attendance. All at teaching task. Appear motivated and cheerful.	Poor attendance. Several not teaching. Principal and teachers absent at one school visited. Children alone.
15. Supervision	Regularly provided by Foundation staff. Supportive role. Excellent rapport with principals and teachers.	District supervisors visit schools sporadically. Mainly perceived as inspectors. Poor rapport.
16. 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade test results	Over 99% passed in 2000. Low scores.	Over 99% passed in 2000. Low scores.

### ***Physical Plant***

Physical plant improvement and maintenance is the most visible and frequent intervention of the Falconbridge Foundation. It is also one of the most glaring differences with the non-sponsored schools visited by the team. While the sponsored schools operate in clean, tidy, well-maintained premises, the regular public schools visited exhibited appalling facilities and desperate need of repair or, in some cases, outright demolition. Symbolic of these conditions is the prevailing foul smell perceptible at most public schools visited due to the lack of working toilets and water system. Schools conducting classes under a tree or in a crumbling sheds, classrooms with broken windows and doors or with ceilings about to fall on the children and a large, dark, dilapidated

hall with up to four classes running at the same time and playgrounds flooded with rainwater are just a few examples of the conditions observed by the team in the non-sponsored schools. On the other hand, recently built schools, such as Bayacanes in La Vega, were exhibiting serious signs of decay after just a few years due to lack of maintenance.

Since 1990, the Foundation has invested around \$2 million in physical plant improvement and maintenance, which represents about 60 percent of the total investment of the school sponsorship. Practically all 100 sponsored schools have received support for physical plant improvement. All schools in the program were built by the government. Thus, the program is a partnership between the public and the private sector, whereby the public sector has made the initial capital investment in infrastructure while the Foundation has focused on maintenance and repair.

The following are some of the most common physical plant improvements observed in the schools visited:

- General repairs to the school building,
- Construction of external wall around the school premises,
- Construction of bathrooms and drinking fountains,
- General beautification of the schools with gardens, painting, ornamentation.
- Improvement of playground and construction of sports fields,
- Construction of additional classrooms,
- Installation of shutters on classroom windows,
- Door and windows installation and/or repair,
- Complete electric rewiring,
- Installation of electrical generator,
- Installation of ceiling fans throughout the school premises,
- Construction and/or improvement of eating facilities,
- Setting up and stocking of school library.

The benefits provided by the improvements to the physical plant, reiterated by teachers, parents, and students, are evident to any observer. These investments contribute many benefits to the school operations, which were repeatedly stated in discussions with the evaluation team:

- Improved child and school safety through outside walls, gates, doors, windows, and locks. Most sponsored schools operate within or near marginal areas, often with problems of delinquency.
- Teachers and parents declared student absences and dropout had diminished due to the attractiveness of the school facilities. Some said that many students stayed in school well past the school day and delayed going home because of the pleasant environment.
- Improved learning environment through more comfortable premises with more reliable electricity supply, better lighting, additional classroom space, window shutters, ceiling fans, and library.

- Enhanced student physical and psychomotor development through improved playing fields and sports facilities as well as through an adequate source of potable running water.
- Healthier and more hygienic school environment through running water, toilets, garbage disposal, cleaner premises, better drainage, mosquito protection, and better eating facilities.

### ***School Administration***

One of the main strengths of the Foundation education program is its competent and dedicated management. This same principle of competency and dedication to good management is passed on to the individual schools. The school director is considered a determining factor in the success of a sponsored school. Thus, as a matter of policy, the Foundation requires that the director demonstrate willingness and commitment to undertake the necessary changes to improve school operations. The Foundation assists in strengthening the managerial and leadership capabilities of directors through training events, technical support, and various other incentives. Specific workshops for school directors include topics such as: school administration and the role of the director; strategic planning within the school community; budget formulation and management; and school statistics and reporting. In addition to the workshops, Foundation staff provide constant support to the directors through regular visits to the schools.

During the visits to the schools, the evaluation team was able to witness the excellent rapport between the school principals and the Foundation field staff. Invariably, the directors interviewed acknowledged the support of the Falconbridge Foundation to their own professional development, in addition to the support provided to the school as a whole. Several directors mentioned specific courses provided by the Foundation on school administration. At least three directors mentioned “interactive supervision” as a new skill acquired in the courses that they had applied with good results. Directors also repeatedly referred to an “increased awareness of their leadership role in the school community” and to the acquisition of leadership skills as a result of the workshops. Finally, directors mentioned “participatory management” as a principle learned in the workshops that helps them in their administrative work.

The following are some of the administrative strengths observed by the evaluation team during visits to the Foundation schools:

- Availability of a work plan or calendar for the school year,
- Operational school statistics system,
- Up-to-date student records,
- Absenteeism tracked and dealt with,
- Teacher attendance control system,
- Equipment and materials inventories,
- Vigilance on premises maintenance, cleanliness, and ornamentation,
- Careful stewardship of resources provided.

Not all sponsored schools have achieved an equal level of administrative competency. Few schools have developed a strategic plan as instilled in the workshops, complete with short-term and long-term goals and vision for the future. Few conduct evaluation sessions with the teachers to review successes and failures or conduct regular teachers’ meetings. Some schools are behind with their attendance records or they do not appear to be accurate. Several directors still exhibit a ‘grantee’ mentality, i.e., expect the Foundation to continue to provide for all their needs.

The guidance and support provided by the Foundation staff are far superior and more frequent than that of the district supervisors. A valuable extension of the Foundation’s work would be to

begin a process of training and assisting the district supervisors to assume a supportive role in addition to their monitoring responsibilities.

#### **A “Star” Director**

The Director of a large urban primary school in La Vega has been a teacher for 28 years and director of this school for the past 9 years. She is working on her dissertation for the Basic Education Bachelors degree. The school has 2,147 students in 25 classes in the morning shift and 26 in the afternoon shift in grades K – 8<sup>th</sup>. The evaluation team was impressed with the director’s leadership and managerial skills. When we arrived at the school, she was directing the school entrance routine. The small front patio was crowded with over 1,000 pupils but all the procedures were performed in a surprisingly orderly fashion. The national anthem was sung, a prayer was said, instructions for the day were delivered, and each class proceeded to their classrooms without any disturbance or complication.

Once all the teachers and their pupils were in their classrooms, we settled down for our interview. The initial questions in the interview protocol dealt with school statistics, and we immediately realized that she is meticulous about record keeping, without the need to scramble in search of numbers on enrollment, gender distribution, attendance, and absences. She keeps this information at the tip of her fingers. She also knows her teachers and can quickly report on their numbers per shift, their gender distribution, their level of training, i.e. normal school vs. university graduates, their attendance record, and so on. As director, she makes sure that the school grounds are not only kept clean and tidy but that there is plenty of visual material on bulletin boards and posters encouraging learning, reminding of the monthly themes, and recognizing individual and class achievements. She has arranged for each class to take charge of a plot in the school garden and be responsible for growing plants and flowers. Likewise, classes take turns picking up trash from the school grounds.

But the most distinguishing characteristic of her leadership is her results orientation. She and her teachers rigorously analyze student achievement reports and conduct self-assessment sessions, seeking causes and solutions to problem areas. For example, at the end of last school year they saw with alarm that 22 percent of the third grade pupils had to repeat the grade because they could not read and write. They realized that because of the automatic promotion policy for first and second graders recently enacted by the government, they had neglected to monitor pupils’ learning. Consequently, the director and teachers developed a plan to ensure that most school children learn to read and write by the end of second grade. They requested the support of the Foundation to arrange two workshops for the teachers on didactic strategies and to obtain additional teaching materials. Reading and spelling competitions were organized, and parents’ cooperation at home was encouraged. Finally, a symbolic learning recognition system was devised in the form of a graduation ceremony in front a large parent, teacher, and student audience, where second graders, dressed in mortar boards and gowns, receive a diploma that states “I know how to read and write.” This director’s example is a clear demonstration that change is possible with good leadership and a measure of shared enthusiasm.

#### ***Personal and Professional Development for Teachers***

Teachers are the key to success of the program in the classroom and in student achievement. Teacher training and support is another feature that distinguishes the Foundation-sponsored schools from the regular public schools. The Ministry in-service training courses for public school teachers consist of summer courses on teaching skills and/or subject matter. Some topics were conspicuously absent: evaluation, planning and programming, and student personal problems. Results were visible in the teachers’ attitudes that range from depression over their lot to disinterested, cynical, and pusillanimous attitudes. Conversely, Foundation in-service training events focus on the professional and the personal development of teachers. One of results cited by the Foundation is that teachers show higher self-knowledge and self-esteem as a result of the training. Several teachers and directors expressed enthusiastic appreciation for the series of courses run by Prof. Angel Villarini on Constructivist Learning and Dr. Vicente Vargas on self-esteem, values, and life planning. Interviewees perceived Foundation training to be directly



relevant to their needs and to the local reality. While the Ministry courses are centrally designed and planned for the whole country, the Foundation conducts a training needs assessment among the teachers and principals to plan the content and timing of the training events.

The Foundation staff lists on its training records more than 100 workshops offered to the staff of the sponsored schools. The following table presents the numbers of courses conducted during the year for the various audiences involved in the program.

<b>Course Audience</b>	<b>Number of Courses</b>
1. Teachers, directors, counselors	40
2. Directors	9
3. Preschool teachers	12
4. Basic school teachers	6
5. School counselors	13
6. Spanish teachers	7
7. Natural Sciences teachers	8
8. Math teachers	4
9. Social Sciences teachers	4
10. Foreign Language teachers	2
<b>Total number of courses</b>	<b>105</b>

The comprehensive nature of the teacher in-service training program of the Foundation is quite evident when reviewing the titles of the courses. The following table contains a list of the main topics covered at the training courses, arranged by the main content areas.

<b>Training Content Areas</b>	<b>Course Topics Offered to Teachers and Principals</b>
1. Teacher Personal Development and Validation	Self-esteem, Critical-thinking skills, Teacher personality, Self-knowledge for teachers, Learning to love what I do, The role of the teacher in the community.
2. Learning Principles	Constructivist approach to learning, Non-sexist education, Teaching to think.
3. Didactic Skills	Positive approach to classroom discipline, Channels for the Communication Process, Reading Skills, Teaching Methodology, Oratory and basic classroom habits, The creative teacher, Teaching program design per subject area, Didactic strategies.
4. Moral Education	Universal and national moral values, The school as moral community, Foundations and goals of moral education, Value clarification, Techniques for conducting ethics workshops in schools.
5. School Administration	Democratic and participatory management, Transformative leadership, The minors legal code, Conflict management in school and classroom, Report writing, Fund raising strategies and skills,

	Decision making in schools, Time management in schools activities, Teamwork
6. Planning and Evaluation	Educational planning, Educational evaluation, Student achievement assessment.
7. Student Counseling	Life planning, The role of the teacher in child emotional development, The Human Formation of school children

In addition to the workshops, the Foundation has purchased a variety of books on general education theory and teaching methods to serve as a reference for teachers in the schools. Foundation staff reported that they have made serious efforts to encourage teachers to read more. They established teachers' literary centers, but were not successful in motivating the teachers to participate. Unfortunately, this effort had to be discontinued.

### ***Assessment, Training, and Gender***

The training program of the Foundation has evolved over the decade, through interaction with the Ministry, and more importantly, through discussions with the teachers and directors about their training needs. The schedule for training during the year is relatively open so that courses can be added as the need arises. Both formal and informal methods are used to gauge the needs. Periodically, the field staff present the teachers with a questionnaire asking about training courses they have had and training courses they need. Informally, in the school visits, the coordinators for Bonao and La Vega observe the schools and talk to the teachers about their work. Needs are sometimes identified in this way.

Based on experience, the Foundation has a "module" of in-service training needs by grade level. The rationale is that all teachers in a sponsored school should be exposed to certain topics and should have access to certain information. The Foundation does not want to duplicate the training provided by the Ministry in filling this need. As teachers move in and out of the district, and as new needs arise, the two sources of training can be effectively coordinated and planned through this master guide.

A final observation is offered on the content of the training from the point of gender equity. In most schools, girls outnumber boys, and the differences are greatest in the upper grades. This schooling, however, is not translating into equity in employment and earnings for women. The Foundation training module includes attention to non-sexist learning principles to confront underlying biases in what is taught. At the same time, students may learn as much from observing the teacher as from what s/he writes on the blackboard. Various observers have commented on the teacher's low sense of worth as professionals. The lack of self-esteem, particularly for young women teachers, is communicated to the students in the classroom and reinforces gender stereotypes. The Foundation's investment in training to work with teachers on "soft" issues like self-image and personal goals is important not only to their skills as teachers but also to their positions as role models.

### ***Classroom Instruction***

The ultimate goal of the Foundation education program, as well as the definitive test of its success, should be found in the measurable improvement in student achievement. This section

discusses the strengths and weaknesses observed in classroom instruction under the assumption that effective instruction contributes significantly to student-learning achievement. Classroom instruction is the arena where both the virtues and limitations of the Foundation education program become most visible. Consequently, the evaluation team invested considerable time and effort in observing classroom activity at each of the schools visited.

Admittedly, classroom observation, while providing good evidence on the quality of the teaching process, does little to show whether the students are learning. The following section of this report gives a comparative analysis of the performances of the students in the Foundation-sponsored schools and the non-sponsored schools on the National 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Tests for the year 2000. Because of widespread mistrust in the value and reliability of the national tests both in terms of design flaws and the well-known corruption in their administration, the evaluation also included the administration of the UNESCO Standard Spanish and Math Tests to third grade students in a sample of sponsored and non-sponsored schools. The UNESCO Latin American Education Evaluation Laboratory designed the test and supervised its administration in the schools of Bonao and La Vega. The results will be appended to this report as soon as they are available.

The Falconbridge Foundation has invested considerable effort and resources to support the improvement of the learning quality within the classroom. A good portion of the teacher training described in the previous section was geared to improving teacher performance in the classroom. The donation of teaching materials and equipment pursues that same end, and improvement of classroom instruction is a recurrent theme in the on-site sessions between the Foundation staff and the teachers.

In order to achieve a degree of uniformity in its observations, the evaluation team devised a Session Observation Protocol to be applied in all the classes observed. The protocol includes instruments to record pre-observation data, classroom activity observation, teacher and student behavior data, and general observation on the classroom, comparing the classroom instruction observed against an inquiry-based learning typology constructed specifically for this evaluation. It includes a list of 12 of the most commonly accepted indicators of effective teaching and learning. The inquiry-based learning method is consistent with the constructivist approach promoted by the Foundation as well as the Ministry's new national curriculum. The following table shows the scores assigned by the evaluation team member in ten randomly selected class sessions observed at ten different sponsored schools.<sup>23</sup>

It is important to note that, notwithstanding the critique that follows, the Foundation schools are clearly ahead of the others in terms of teaching innovation. They also are the schools that are most faithfully implementing the principles of the reformed national curriculum. The sponsored schools are providing the lead in teaching innovation that other schools can follow. Now with a few, focused improvements in classroom instruction, they can become real centers of educational excellence in the country.

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<sup>23</sup> No classroom observations were made in the non-sponsored schools, where extended observation was generally precluded by the terms of the visit or classroom conditions. In this case, the classes are being graded against an objective standard rather than in comparison to other classrooms.

Inquiry-based Learning Method	Class Observed and Score									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Learning objective clearly and fully defined.	A	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	E	C
2. Seating arrangement facilitates inquiry-based learning and teamwork.	E	E	F	E	F	F	E	E	E	E
3. Teacher prepared and used variety of teaching aids.	F	F	E	F	E	E	E	E	F	E
4. Teacher effectively and timely apply learning assessment techniques.	C	E	E	E	E	E	C	E	F	C
5. All or most students are focused on task.	A	E	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
6. Students interact with each other regarding task on hand.	F	F	E	E	F	E	E	E	E	E
7. Teacher acts as facilitator of learning rather than source of knowledge.	E	E	E	C	E	E	E	E	C	E
8. Students confidently seek clarification and better understanding of content.	F	E	E	E	E	F	F	F	F	E
9. Teacher seeks understanding/opinion more than memory of facts.	C	E	F	C	E	E	C	E	C	E
10. Content relates to 'real-world' rather than to abstract knowledge.	F	E	E	C	E	E	E	E	C	C
11. Teacher helps student reason rather than provides reasoning.	F	F	E	E	E	E	E	E	C	E
12. Students talk as much as or more than the teacher.	F	F	E	C	E	E	F	E	C	E

Classes Observed: (1) 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> Spanish  
 (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> Natural Science (4) 5<sup>th</sup> Human Devel.  
 (5) 6<sup>th</sup> Spanish (6) 7<sup>th</sup> Social Science  
 (7) 4<sup>th</sup> Math (8) 8<sup>th</sup> Spanish  
 (9) 6<sup>th</sup> Hum. Devel. (10) 1<sup>st</sup> Natural Science

Scores: A = optimal (fulfills all requirements of method).  
 C = regular (fulfills some of the requirements).  
 E = mediocre (complies with very few of the method requirements).  
 F = non-existent (does not apply method at all).

As shown in the table above, the evaluation team observed some significant strengths but also some remaining weaknesses in the classroom instruction in the sponsored schools. More specifically, the table shows that the teachers are performing well in defining learning objectives for the session. Most teachers wrote on the blackboard the topic of the class and reinforced in the course of the session. The one critique in this respect is that they did not always relate the session objective to previous sessions or the course as a whole. The students continued focus on the class task was remarkable at all the classes observed. Teachers did not seem to have discipline problems in the classroom. Student participation in class was noteworthy but limited to

answering teachers' questions rather than constructing their own learning with the teacher's facilitation.

Among the most glaring weaknesses observed was the scarcity of teaching aids prepared by the teacher regarding the class topic. The blackboard and the student textbooks and notebooks were the sole didactic material utilized by teachers at most classes observed. From the standpoint of student learning behavior, although obviously disciplined and attentive, the students were passive. Not much innovation is yet visible regarding team learning, free exchange of ideas and opinions, and content clarification. Symbolic of this issue is the traditional seating arrangement that still prevailed in most classrooms observed, with the notable exception of the preschool classes. For the most part, teachers act as lecturers and sole providers of knowledge rather than as learning facilitators.

Preschool classes were the exception to most of the weaknesses pointed out above. Most of the preschool classes observed had appropriate furniture and seating arrangement. The teachers used a variety of learning materials that they had prepared or that were provided by the Foundation. With few exceptions, the children were actively engaged in learning projects and related well to their fellow students. The vignette below illustrates the quality of teaching. The Foundation's emphasis on improving the quality of preschool education is evidently paying off. This is a crucial task, as the quality of the preschool experience is widely considered a major factor in student achievement throughout his/her school career.

#### **An Excellent Preschool Class**

The preschool class at a large primary school in downtown Bonao is not very different from a kindergarten class in the suburban USA. The classroom is large enough to accommodate all the furniture and the various displays and materials that abound in pre-primary school classes. The 28 children attending on the day of our visit were sitting in groups of five or six around little tables working on the day's project. On that day, they were designing a gift for their mothers for the forthcoming Mother's Day. The gift consisted of a cardboard flower that would be fixed to an upside-down plastic drinking cup with a stem made from a drinking straw. All was to be painted in appropriate colors to give the appearance of a potted flower plant. All the children were concentrating on the task and appeared to be enjoying it.

Prior to beginning the task, the teacher had led a discussion on mothers, both in nature and in society, i.e., human mothers, animal mothers, and life reproduction. The teacher also told about the daily routine of the class. Children arrive in the classroom and seek their names that are written in cards and placed in a box. They recognize their name cards from either the letters or the pictures on them. Once they find them, they place their name cards in the appropriate holes in a wall chart. Another routine is to set a wall calendar finding the right day of the week and the corresponding date. Likewise, they set the weather chart with pictures for sunny, cloudy, or rainy based on their observation of the sky from the classroom window.

In addition to the effective planning and execution of learning tasks, we were impressed with the abundance of experiential learning devices around the classroom. The sides of the classroom were arranged into several sections on different themes such as: Home, Numbers, Nature, Homeland, Library, and even a Quiet or Thinking Corner. All sections were full of appropriate tools and materials. The children's works were displayed around the classroom. One of the corners of the classroom was equipped with small foam mattresses for naps after lunch or to be used by children who felt tired or sick during the day. Preschool education has been a priority for the Foundation program. The Foundation has provided schools with furniture, equipment, teaching aids, and disposable materials as well as training and technical support. The investment provided in this particular class is clearly paying off.

### ***School Climate***

Physical plant improvements, director and teacher training, and the promotion of parent and student involvement in school administration, all result in a much changed and improved school climate, which most visibly distinguishes sponsored from non-sponsored schools. The characteristics of this new school climate include:

- Conducive learning environment with comfortable classrooms set in clean, orderly, well-kept school premises.
- Directors aware of a broader leadership role of the school community.
- Student personal development activities resulting in higher self esteem, more self-confidence, students more articulate in expressing views, and more leadership skill development.
- Learning experiences arranged throughout the school: gardens for natural science and environmental awareness, participation in garbage disposal, and bulletin boards with themes.
- Display of students' work in classrooms and for the whole school; also science and arts exhibitions, which validate students' work and provide learning incentives for all students.
- Special classes for overage students and inclusion of handicapped pupils in the classroom, which contribute to acceptance of diversity among school children.
- Teachers exhibiting motivation, although their salaries are the same as any other teachers. This shows that teachers positively respond when provided with decent working conditions and validation of their work.

### ***Discussion***

The evaluation team confirmed that there are significant and clearly observable differences in the quality of the learning environment between the sponsored and non-sponsored schools. The testimony of school directors, teachers, parents, students, Ministry of Education officials, and representatives of international cooperation agencies also confirmed this conclusion.

In addition to investment in the improvement of the school physical and teaching environment, the main factor in the success of the Foundation model is the close technical and personal support to the directors and teachers provided by the Foundation field staff.

The Foundation experience demonstrates that strengthening the leadership role of the local school director through training, supervision, and technical support is a preeminent factor in the success of a decentralized school improvement program.

The Foundation-integrated approach to teacher in-service training is commendable. Improvement in teacher attitude and performance occurs when teacher training includes both professional and personal skill development.

The quality of classroom instruction at sponsored schools, although visibly better than regular schools, only partially reflects the content of the Foundation interventions. The most evident weaknesses relate to teaching methodology and learning evaluation.

A ‘grantee’ mentality, whereby directors continue to turn to the Foundation to solve most problems, still prevails at most schools, demonstrating the need for strategic planning and increased concern for sustainability among directors and others in the school community.

The support and technical assistance of the Foundation staff contrast sharply with that provided by District supervisors. The foundation has made efforts to transfer these skills to Ministry technical personnel, yet the rapid and constant turnover in Ministry technical personnel has led to dependence on foundation staff.

### **C. Student Achievement: Eighth Grade National Exam, 2000**

Student testing, with valid and reliable standardized instruments, is widely accepted as a quantitative indicator of the quality of schools academically. The administration of the National Tests to all students at the end of the fourth and eighth grades was introduced in the Dominican Republic as a part of the education reforms of the *Plan Decenal*. The National Tests have been widely criticized, and their validity as an absolute measure of what students know is questionable. As a comparative measure across schools, however, the scores provide some indication of the relative achievement of students in schools sponsored by the Falconbridge Foundation.

The evaluation team conducted an analysis of student performance on eighth grade exams on the National Tests for the year 2000 using data provided by the National Tests Office in the Ministry of Education. The analysis focuses on differences in the average (mean) scores on the Spanish and math exams for students in Foundation-sponsored public schools, non-sponsored public schools, and private schools (also non-sponsored).

The overall results of the Dominican Republic Eighth Grade Exam in Math and Spanish show that students participating in the exam generally do not do well. However, girls participating in the two exams typically perform better than boys. The overall mean score for all students (Foundation-sponsored schools, other Dominican Republic public schools, and private schools) in math was 49.14. The overall mean score for these students in Spanish was 50.99.

The variance from these two means when disaggregated by the three groups--Falconbridge Foundation schools, other Dominican Republic public schools, and private schools--even though statistically significant in some cases, is not large. The disaggregated mean score in math for students in Foundation sponsored schools is 49.10. Their mean score for Spanish is 50.38. The disaggregated mean score in math for students in other Dominican Republic public schools is 48.27. Their mean score for Spanish is 50.27. The mean score in math for students in private schools is 51.69 while their mean score in Spanish is 53.18.

Controlling for the origin of students participating in the National Exam, the variance of mean scores in math and Spanish of students participating in the Foundation-sponsored schools in Monseñor province and Bonao district are typically much larger when compared to the national mean scores. This is important because the Falconbridge Foundation has sponsored schools in

Monseñor province and Bonao district for a longer period of time than in La Vega, and because the public school students in this province and this district very likely comprise a comparable population. This variance in mean scores between students in Foundation-sponsored schools and those in public schools suggests that the Foundation sponsorship of schools contributes to the academic achievement of students. Nevertheless, the mean scores for students in Foundation-sponsored schools also indicate that there is still much room for academic improvement in these schools.

Details of that analysis, including bar graphs of major comparisons, are provided in Appendix E.

#### **D. The Falconbridge Foundation Model**

The final analytical section of the report examines the role of the Foundation as the implementing organization of the school sponsorship program. The relationships identified here are used in the following section for drawing lessons from this experience about the potential for expanding this type of private sector support to the public schools in other regions.

It also examines the costs and expenditure patterns of the Foundation sponsorship program and the relationship between the costs and the effectiveness of the various components of the program. A central point in examining the patterns of costs and expenditures is that the implementation is local. In a sense, in the school sponsorship program, the Foundation is funding 100 separate projects.

#### ***Managing a Network of Relationships***

In developing its programs, the Foundation sits within a network of institutions, critical to its capacity to fulfill its goals. Examination of the way the Foundation manages the relationships within this network is instructive both in assessing staffing patterns and program content, and in considering the requirements for replicating the school sponsorship activities. To some extent, the network shifts with program area. The focus here is on the education programs, and specifically on school sponsorship.

The Falconbridge Foundation was established to mediate the relationship between Falconbridge Dominicana and the community where it operates. To fill this role, the Foundation states clearly that it serves the community and its interests. According to the Foundation Executive Director, this stance has been key to its credibility with the community and to maintaining the residents' trust and cooperation.

The success of the Foundation on the other side of the mediation role is based primarily on results. The Foundation's work in the region has in fact curbed the violence directed at the Falconbridge operations. This result, as well as concrete evidence of improved conditions in the schools, has been the base for the continuing support of the Foundation by the company. While the staff has considerable independence in operations, they remain subject to controls. The structure of the Board and the experience of the Executive Director also reinforce the trust



between the activities of the Foundation and the company.<sup>24</sup> The President of the Foundation emphasized that for a company to support this type of program it needs to have oversight and control of how its money is spent. Each year, the staff submits a work plan and budget for Board approval. Policy decisions are made by the Board. The recent major decision to expand the school sponsorship program into the province of La Vega was made by the Board at the behest of the company. Technical and logistical considerations from the Foundation staff were secondary factors.

Community acceptance of a long-term development program predicated on community collaboration from a Foundation linked to the Falconbridge mining operation evolved slowly. The relationship between the Foundation and the community is supported by the staffing of the programs with professionals from the region, and by the relationship with the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Executive Director feels that having clearly articulated requirements for participating in the program and guidelines that are followed carefully for how Foundation funds are invested, have contributed to community trust. The Foundation school sponsorship program is perceived as a “serious” program in the sense that it is focused on improving the quality of education. It is managed fairly; there is nothing in it for individuals.

Within the community, a key client group for the Foundation is school directors and teachers. The school sponsorship program is built on their active participation and support. In visiting the schools, it is clear that a central factor in reinforcing this support is the Foundation field staff, who are keenly aware of the necessity of managing these relationships carefully. The supervisor of the program in Bonao, who has worked with the Foundation since 1993, said that when she visits a school, she enters as a collaborator and not a supervisor, a person offering technical assistance. If she observes a problem in the school or the classroom she does not report it or seek disciplinary action, but finds another way to deal with it. For example, she may try to set up a training program related to the problem, or arrange for a session at the school with a psychologist. The Foundation places considerable weight on the interaction with the faculty, to ensure that the teaching materials donated by the Foundation are being used properly, to assess training needs, and to maintain rapport by showing the teachers that the Foundation supports them.

All teachers are members of the influential teachers’ union, the ADP. The local representative of the union in Bonao voiced strong support for the Foundation school sponsorship program. He said that the bottom line for teachers is that they want to do their job well. The Foundation supports them in this effort.<sup>25</sup> All the teachers in Bonao have benefited from the training provided by the Foundation, the teaching materials, and the improved school environment and infrastructure improvements. With sponsorship, desertion rates have declined, and parents have

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<sup>24</sup> The Executive Director says that she has credibility with the business community because of her earlier experience as Executive Director of the Investment Promotion Council. The Executive Director is considered part of the senior management of Falconbridge Dominicana.

<sup>25</sup> When asked about how the teachers and the union felt about support from Falconbridge Dominicana as a large corporation, he said teachers want the means to do their job well, and its not important to them who provides the support. He noted the importance of the Foundation selection criteria and its conformance with them.

taken more interest in the schools and education. He also cited the support of kindergartens as important for bringing more children into the schools.<sup>26</sup>

According to the Executive Director of the Foundation, a third factor in maintaining the support of the directors and the teachers is their perception that the Foundation has influence with the Ministry, particularly in terms of placements and promotions. In fact, the amount of influence varies with the administration and the regional and district appointees.<sup>27</sup>

The final key institution in the Foundation network is the government, and particularly the Ministry of Education. A central tenet of the school sponsorship program is that it supports and expands, but does not replace the efforts of the Ministry in public education. Although the Ministry and its relationship with the Foundation are in no sense unitary, the personal relationship of the Executive Director with the Minister sets the tone for interactions throughout the system. The sponsorship program has been developed under three different Ministers, and in all three cases, the Executive Director of the Foundation has developed a viable working relationship. This relationship helps shape the reception to the Foundation among political appointees at the regional and district levels, but at all levels, the personal element is important. From the point of view of the Foundation, theoretically, the relationship with the Ministry should be collaborative rather than controlling or supervisory.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the personal relationship with the Minister, other linkages are in place between the Ministry and the Foundation's school sponsorship program in the field. First, the Foundation's regional office is in the district building of the Ministry in Bonao. All equipment and supplies purchased by the Foundation for the schools are distributed from this building. Secondly, the program coordinator, supervisor for La Vega, and the field staff, are employees of the Ministry of Education, working full-time with the Foundation.<sup>29</sup> This arrangement demonstrates the government's substantive support for the school sponsorship program; it also eases the relationships with the school staffs, since the people visiting them on behalf of the Foundation are colleagues. These staff are particularly effective in carrying the point of view and concerns of the teachers to the Foundation.

The biggest difficulty in coordination with the Ministry has been training, in both topics and scheduling. Teacher training is the responsibility of the Ministry, and the Foundation has made a serious effort not to duplicate its offerings. The Foundation also has provided extensive training

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<sup>26</sup> He said that, to some extent, the Foundation may be replacing ministry responsibilities in Bonao. In response to a petition for school breakfasts in Bonao, for example, someone at the Ministry replied that the government program is not needed there because "you have the Foundation."

<sup>27</sup> It is important to say that the relationship between the Foundation and the local school personnel is not a panacea. Not all directors are collaborative; not all teachers are committed and constantly improving as a result of training. Transfers of teachers and directors, often for political reasons, can drastically change the relationship between the Foundation and a particular school community. In at least three cases, the Foundation began a sponsorship program with a school and then suspended it because of lack of collaboration.

<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the Executive Director of the Foundation frequently said that her biggest handicap is the fact that she has no control over the hiring and firing of school personnel.

<sup>29</sup> At the time of the evaluation, the field coordinator in La Vega was only working half time with the Foundation, and his time was paid for by both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture (since he also was working on the Natural Resources Program). His status was expected to change to full time in the near future. By continuing with the Ministry, these individuals retain their years toward retirement and their benefits. The Foundation pays them an "incentive," which they receive in addition to their salary.

for preschool teachers. The Foundation notifies both the District and Regional offices of upcoming training sessions, with at least two weeks anticipation, but overlapping schedules because of last minute scheduling of meetings or Ministry training are not unusual.<sup>30</sup> The Foundation's response to this situation was, "We've learned to be flexible – from experience."

### ***Budget and Expenditures***

The Foundation supplied the evaluation team with various pieces of information about costs, budgets, and expenditures. These include a general breakdown of expenditures (in US dollars and RD pesos) by category of program from 1990 to 2000, and total expenditures (in RD pesos) for each school the team visited, broken down by infrastructure improvements, equipment/furniture and teaching materials, library, and professional training and adult education. For three schools in each district, we have total annual expenditures between 1990 and 2000. (These are expressed in US dollars, with the exchange rate noted for each year.) Finally, we have the annual budget (in US dollars) for 1996 to 2001.

Using this information it is possible to make general observations about the investments being made by the Falconbridge Foundation, but comparisons across schools, districts, and time are difficult. Two particular points are worth noting. First, budgets and expenditures are not the same thing. The Executive Director said that unused funds from one year can be held over to the next and that excess funds in other budget categories are routinely transferred to the school sponsorship program. Second, the Foundation has used fluctuations in the exchange rate to their advantage. Neither the amounts expressed in US dollars nor those expressed in RD pesos necessarily reflect actual buying power of the budget, or meaningful comparisons across time.

#### ***Total Budget.***

- For the decade from 1990 to 2000, the Foundation has invested more than US\$5 million in education programs, including the school sponsorship program and the scholarship and loan program for professional and technical training. Education programs accounted for 64 percent of total Foundation expenditures during this period. Based on current budget allocations to the sponsorship program, the total spent on this program for the decade is somewhere around US\$3.0 million.
- Since 1996, the Foundation's annual budget has fluctuated between US\$800,000 and US\$900,000, with one exception. In 1998, the budget reached US\$1,425,000, reflecting the beginning of the sponsorship program in La Vega, and the Civic Education Project. Operating expenses have stood consistently at about 23 percent of the total.
- In these same years, the school sponsorship program budget for the Monseñor Nouel districts was about US\$120,000.<sup>31</sup> When the La Vega schools were added in 1998, they were budgeted separately at about US\$250,000, except for the first year, when \$813,000 was included.

<sup>30</sup> This problem was mentioned by the Bonao district director as well as the Foundation. Another factor that interferes with schedules are the frequent strikes called by the union.

<sup>31</sup> The Civic Education projects provided an additional US\$15,000 – US\$20,000 in 1996, 1997, and 1998.

- On an annual basis, the proportion of the budget allocated to the school sponsorship program grew from 17 percent in 1996, to 54 percent in 1998, when La Vega was added, to between 40 and 44 percent since 1999. In the 2001 budget, the Foundation allocated \$133,000 for the 60 schools in Bonao, and US\$250,000 for the 40 schools in La Vega, with the expectation of adding five new schools in La Vega.<sup>32</sup> This totaled \$US383,000.

**Expenditures per School.** The expenditures and budget for the program as a whole can be used to provide estimates of the annual cost of the program per school, per student, and per teacher. First, in very gross terms, using the 2001 budget figures, the following expenditures have been estimated:<sup>33</sup> for 100 schools, the average investment per school is US\$5000; assuming 73,000 students, the average investment per student is US\$6.75; assuming 1600 teachers, the average investment per teacher is US\$310. These very gross calculations bear little relationship to the reality of how the funds are spent by the Foundation, however.

For the Foundation, expenditures are determined on a per school basis, and vary by need, size of the school, and organization of the school community. Requests for funding are generated at the local level, and each request is assessed on merit. Within the constraints of the total budget, local requests are prioritized for funding. The standards for the investments in the schools are those of the Ministry. The Foundation pays for repairs in schools built by the Ministry. The furniture and equipment match those supplied by the Ministry. The Foundation implements activities called for in the Education Law. Foundation-sponsored schools stand out not because they are palaces but because they are up to standard. The assessment of local requests is based on these criteria and contribution to the objectives of the program, improved access and quality of education.

Examination of the expenditure patterns for the schools visited by the evaluation team reinforces this point. The patterns by time in the program, size of the school, and district are defined as much by exception as by rule.

- Comparisons across schools in the Bonao district, by the year they entered the program reveal few consistent patterns.<sup>34</sup> In general, but not uniformly, the schools in the Bonao district that have been sponsored for the longest time have received the highest total funds, and average investment per student (size of school) is lower in the schools that entered most recently.
- Based on very rough calculations of the per-student investment for the decade,<sup>35</sup> as a proxy measure of size, in schools that entered the sponsorship program in 1990 and 1991, the average per student is approximately US\$136 per student. This rough average drops to about US\$67 for schools that entered between 1992 and 1994, and to US\$29 for

<sup>32</sup> Note that these totals do not include operating expenses, which were budgeted at US\$210,000 in 2001.

<sup>33</sup> Basis for these calculations: The sponsorship program is budgeted for a total of US\$383,000, including both Bonao and La Vega. Since this program is about 44% of the budget, assume 44% of operating expenses (\$92,400), for a total of \$475,400, rounded up to US\$500,000.

<sup>34</sup> Since the data on individual schools are reported in RD pesos, differences over time are affected by the exchange rate. Presumably, investments in schools that are most recently sponsored buy less than investments made in the early 1990s.

<sup>35</sup> Given the growth in the number of students over the decade and variations in the exchange rate, these calculations are not meaningful in any absolute sense. At best, they show a pattern of change.

schools admitted between 1995 and 1997. Within each grouping of years, there is considerable variation across schools. For example, among the six schools that have been sponsored since 1990 or 1991, investment on a per-student basis varies between RD pesos 664 and 1840. The largest investment on a per-student basis was made in a school that has been sponsored since 1994.

- In the La Vega district, considering the nine schools visited by the evaluation team, all of which entered the program in 1998 or 1999, the average investment on a per-student basis is roughly US\$60, again showing tremendous variation (from RD pesos 198 to RD pesos 1667).
- In general, higher per-student investments correspond to a higher proportion of the investment going into infrastructure improvements. In a few cases, where the school is in a new building, the investment in infrastructure is minor but the Foundation has made a major investment in equipping the school with desks, blackboards, furniture for the teachers and director, etc.
- Two observations are offered on the differences between Bonao and La Vega. In part, the differences reflect differences in the six districts and in the schools participating in the sponsorship program. The schools in the program in La Vega are bigger on average than the schools in Bonao, and school repairs are more costly. (The 40 schools in La Vega have an average of 1668 students; the 60 schools in Bonao average 518 students.) The Foundation has concentrated first on the large urban schools in La Vega to maximize the students affected by the program. In Bonao, after 10 years, even very small rural schools are sponsored, with higher costs per pupil. In general, schools in La Vega have more resources than schools in Bonao. Most have the school breakfast program, and three of the schools visited by the team have projects with other donors (e.g., the World Bank, Israel, Japan).

A second factor is the change in the configuration of the investment over time. Infrastructure and equipment purchases are the first steps in the sponsorship program. These are also the costliest investments. Many of the schools in La Vega are still at this stage, whereas most of the schools in Bonao visited by the team are now concentrating on other types of support from the Foundation. In La Vega between 1990 and 2000, school building repair and expansion accounted for 66 percent of total expenditures in the sponsorship program, while in Bonao, infrastructure accounted for 60 percent of the expenditures on this program during the decade.

The shifts in expenditures from infrastructure to training and organizational support are evident in comparing the breakdown of expenditures for the decade by district:

#### **Percent Distribution of Expenditures, 1990-2000, by District**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>Bonao</b>	<b>La Vega</b>
Infrastructure improvements	60	66
Equipment & teaching materials	13	17
Teacher training	9	7

School libraries	5	3
Student councils	6	1
Cultural & sports activities	3	2
Strengthening of parent assns.	2	1
Support to Min. reg./distr. offices	2	3
TOTAL	100%	100%

- The change in the pattern of expenditures and requests over time is illustrated by annual expenditure data on three schools in each district for the period 1990 to 2000. In Bonao, Escuela Benito Alberto was the first school sponsored by the Foundation. More than US\$66,000 was spent on the school in the first two years. This amount is more than half of the total expenditures for the school through the year 2000. In 1999, total expenditures in the school were about US\$5000; in 2000, they were around US\$6000. Similarly, Escuela de Jayaco entered the program in 1992, with an initial investment of US\$10,783. The following year, the cost for the Foundation was US\$12,070. In 1999, the school requested only US\$152, and it received no funds in 2000.

The same pattern is evident in the three schools offered as examples in La Vega, but the programs are only four years old, so that the upfront expenses are a higher proportion of total expenditures. In Padre Lamarche, US\$37,500 were spent in 1997, and nearly US\$30,000 were spent in 1998. By contrast, total expenditures for 1999 and 2000 in this school were less than US\$8,500.

- Training costs and technical assistance with the parent associations and student councils also are relatively constant across schools, whereas costs of physical plant repair vary greatly depending on the condition of the building. The budgets for the school sponsorship program in Bonao during the last five years show a relatively stable proportion of the budget going to teacher training (15 percent), adult education (6 to 8 percent), and library provisions (average about 8 percent).<sup>36</sup>
- Directing the activities to the local jurisdictions rather than through the central offices of the Ministry also reduced expenses. Support to the District and Regional Offices of the Ministry is on the same basis as support to the local school. Each request is assessed separately by the Foundation in terms of its contribution to the educational goals of the program and availability of funds.

The question for the evaluation is whether this program is expensive. Does it provide value for the money? In terms of replication, does the cost of the program put it out of reach of other private sector firms? Clearly, the investment of Falconbridge Dominicana in education in the Dominican Republic has been substantial, especially when viewed in terms of the long-term commitment. At the same time, the program is large. On a per school basis, the investment and the costs have been significant but not extravagant. Basically, they match the expectations of civil society as reflected in the Education Law and the *Plan Decenal*. They reflect the input of the local community in defining needs and in labor and financial counterpart.

<sup>36</sup> The discrepancies between these percentages and those in the table above may reflect two factors. First, the table covers 10 years, and these figures are for the last five years. The pattern of expenditures has changed because of the decrease in infrastructure expenditures. Second, the table shows expenditures and these figures are from the budget.

In calculating the cost of replicating the Foundation model, more information is needed. The costs reflected here do not include the operating expenses of the Foundation, the support in kind and in salaries from the Ministry, services provided directly by the company, and savings due to economies of scale in the Foundation program (e.g., training and staff). Additional attention also is needed to shifts in the cost structure over time, and particularly to the start-up costs, which have been buried in the global figures used here. The number of private sector firms and implementing organizations involved in replicating the model also will affect operating expenses.

### ***The Future***

For Falconbridge Dominicana, the Foundation is concrete evidence of its position as a socially responsible company. While the improvements in the relationship between the company and the local community, and the satisfaction of serving the Dominican Republic have been important results, the company also uses this program internationally to demonstrate their corporate responsibility program. The Foundation has hosted visitors from New Caledonia and Australia, for example. In an era when *corporate citizenship* and *public-private partnership* are part of the public image of a multinational corporation, for Falconbridge Limited, the benefits are broader than the Dominican Republic.

The company hopes to continue mining in the Dominican Republic for at least 15 more years. The Foundation is a godparent who gives less and less overtime as the godchild becomes more independent. New schools are still being admitted to the program, but there is no expectation that the program will expand beyond this region. Increasingly, the focus is on training for directors and teachers, and expenses for routine maintenance (with the support of the parent groups). The direct involvement of the Foundation staff, particularly with parents and students, is reduced.<sup>37</sup>

Foundation staff point to two important lessons of their experience of the last decade essential in planning for the next steps. First, the program needs to be focused, with a clear sense of goals. Decisions are made in terms of how they affect or are related to the Foundation's primary objectives in education. Second, in program planning the Foundation staff need to have a clear sense of what they can accomplish. They need to show results. They do not want to take on projects they cannot finish, or to become involved in activities that increase dependency (as opposed to building self-reliance).

Two unresolved questions are paramount in examining the future of the Foundation. First, "Will schools leave the sponsorship program and go forward on their own, or will the need for sponsorship continue in the foreseeable future?" At this point, according to both the Foundation and representatives of the school communities, although the content of sponsorship changes and costs are reduced, no clear alternative exists for maintaining the school buildings and improving the quality of the school experience. While sponsorship has been successful in changing the attitudes of the local school communities so that in many cases they realize that they can accomplish change, the resources to carry out their projects are not available. Private sector sponsorship has become essential to supplement the strikingly inadequate budget of the Ministry.

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<sup>37</sup> According to the Executive Director, oversight by Foundation staff also is less intensive in schools entering the program now in La Vega than it has been in Bonao simply because staff time is stretched thinner as the number of schools increases.

Given the response to the first question, the second question is, “What will happen to the Falconbridge Foundation when Falconbridge Dominicana leaves the Dominican Republic?” The sustainability of the Foundation itself becomes more important with time. A rudimentary endowment fund is in place, and it will grow. Organizational and management questions, and the relationship to Falconbridge Limited have not been discussed.



#### **IV. ISSUES IN REPLICATION OF THE MODEL**

Progress in educational reform in the Dominican Republic has been handicapped by a number of factors, but key among them is a scarcity of resources. The Falconbridge Foundation school sponsorship program is of interest as an example of collaboration between a private sector firm and the government to make up some of this shortfall. The evaluation team found widespread acclamation for this “public/private partnership” in the Ministry as well as in the private sector. To what extent can this experience be duplicated in other regions of the Dominican Republic?

Private sector firms in the Dominican Republic are receptive to providing support for education. Falconbridge Dominicana’s interest in education reform and improved education quality is not unique. On the broadest level, private sector investment in public education is an issue of self-interest.

Since the early 1990s, widespread consensus has developed in the private sector of this country that reform in the public education system is the number one social priority. Students trained under this system lack the skills and qualifications to prepare them for employment. Without reform, the Dominican Republic does not have the base of human capital skills to compete and prosper within the global economy. School sponsorship also is consistent with the growing pressure internationally for “corporate citizenship,” which states that the private sector, especially multinational firms, has an ethical responsibility to contribute as neighbors in the countries in which they operate. School sponsorship has been promoted by EDUCA and the Ministry of Education, and has enjoyed strong political support. Other multinational and national firms have undertaken sponsorship projects in the Dominican Republic. The Falconbridge Foundation model is distinguished from these other efforts by its success and tangible results, its long-term commitment to the schools, and its breadth.

##### **A. The Model**

The Falconbridge Foundation model is not a “what” but a “how.” School improvement models typically consist of a “product” that, when implemented, will work toward improving the school environment and ultimately, student achievement. The Foundation model is based around a process to strengthen the educational delivery system in each school.

The Foundation works with the local school as a system, focusing on the local capacity of each school community to improve the coverage and quality of basic public education. It involves a long-term commitment with decreasing financial support for the school over time. Importantly, it supports but does not substitute for the role of the Ministry of Education in the schools. It has no formal activities related to national policy or administration.

Other key characteristics of the process model include:

- Substantive participation of the school community from conception through implementation to maintenance.
- Foundation consultation with the community and Foundation reliability in following through on mutually agreed obligations.

- Accountability of the school community in its responsibilities in the program.
- Reduction in the role of the Foundation over time in response to increased capacity in the local community
- Assistance provided directly to the local school community rather than through the Ministry
- Costs minimized on a per school basis.

## **B. Organizational Elements**

Foundation staff identify two key elements in their success in developing and implementing this model: the independence of the Foundation in managing the program; and, a clear sense of the purpose and scope of Foundation activities.

### ***Independence***

Within the policy guidelines and annual oversight provided by the Board, the Foundation has been free to respond to the community and its requirements rather than to the company. In the short term, these two sets of interests are not always congruent. The Foundation had to establish credibility with the community, in a relatively hostile environment. Independence was essential to this process.

The independence of the Foundation also has been important because it has allowed for flexibility in the evolution of the program, a bottom line requirement for the Foundation to work with the communities as partners. The flexibility provides the basis for the activities in each school to develop separately in response to the school community. Local organizations could not grow and increase their capacity to confront local issues if they were presented with a pre-determined Foundation-generated plan. The sponsorship program that we observe today is the result of a process of investments and adjustments, generated locally. There is no reason to assume that the process is now complete and the program has reached its final form. The model involves a process and replication will require flexibility.

This independence and flexibility cannot be taken for granted. A private company donating funds to the community needs to control how those funds are used. For this reason, Falconbridge Dominicana created its own NGO to manage the community program. It maintains control through the Foundation board. Alternatively, the firm may manage the community program directly, as in the case of the CODETEL experience, for example, and the new Timberland program (see text box below.)<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> In the case of CODETEL, independence was never achieved. The company determined the budget breakdown and time allocation, with resulting frustration on the part of the individual responsible for implementation. She was expected to manage school sponsorship in addition to other tasks in the firm. When she left CODETEL, the sponsorship program was terminated.

### Timberland School Sponsorship Program

Timberland began sponsoring a school in a barrio of Santiago last year, following orientation with the Falconbridge Foundation staff. It is interesting as an example of adaptation and replication of the Foundation model. In this case, the motivation for the company is global.

With headquarters in New Hampshire, Timberland manufactures boots and shoes in 25 countries in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. The Dominican Republic plant is located in Santiago and employs about 2000 people. The company prides itself on its record of "corporate citizenship," which falls under the purview of its Office of Global Business Alliance. This year Timberland was named by Business Ethics Magazine as among the "100 Best Corporate Citizens." The Global Business Alliance covers three areas, the Code of Conduct in Manufacturing (non-discriminatory hiring, fair and safe workplaces), community service of employees, and Global Community Investment, which focuses on change to benefit the communities where their plants are located. The purpose is to improve the lives of the workers' families through their communities.

The recently appointed Community Investment Coordinator for Latin America works out of the plant in Santiago. He initiated his activities last September in the Santiago barrio of Cien Fuegos, where most of the Timberland workers live. The focus of the program is school sponsorship, based on the Falconbridge Foundation model. Before starting, he spent considerable time with the Foundation, studying their files, visiting schools, and interviewing the staff. He said the program is like a table with four legs: the infrastructure, the faculty, the parents, and the students. He made no mention of the Ministry of Education. He focuses, like the Foundation, on the local school and its community.

The school sponsored by Timberland this year has more than 3000 students in three sessions (morning, afternoon, evening), and is located in the Cien Fuegos barrio. It is not the school used by most Timberland families but rather the school in the barrio with the most problems. Chief among these were overcrowding, absence of a preschool, and low levels of promotion especially after third grade. Timberland began with repairs to the physical plant, covering 77 percent of the cost, while the community had to come up with the remainder. (It was donated by the Bishop.) Timberland is constructing classrooms for the preschool that will open in September. The program also has included training for teachers, parents, and students, drawing on trainers and the psychologist recommended by Falconbridge Foundation. Organizationally, he has created a committee of 20 people from the community to oversee the project and develop plans for the future. It includes four company employees, six teachers, two students, and eight members of the Association of Parents and Friends. The coordinator anticipates sponsoring a second school in the same barrio in the coming year.

The Timberland annual budget for the community work in the Dominican Republic is US\$100,000. The coordinator will be starting similar community programs in Brazil, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, to be managed through local NGOs. School sponsorship probably will be a part of the program in Brazil and Mexico. In addition to school sponsorship, the community program includes: skills training for employees and their children, given in the barrio in collaboration with INFOTEC (National Institute for Technical Training); projects directed at the community (e.g., this year focusing on re-forestation with the planting of 15,000 trees); and, preventative health, beginning with the students in the sponsored school. During September, Timberland employees devote a certain number of hours to community service, which will be coordinated with the community program.

The balance between control over spending by the firm and independence of action in the community is difficult. For the Falconbridge Foundation the balance developed over time, involving an element of parrying and testing limits. Ultimately, the relationship requires understanding and respecting the interests and expectations of both parties. The Foundation knows that the firm expects results and positive press. The firm respects the expertise of the Foundation staff in producing those results. Control of funds means that the Foundation is dependent on continued support from the firm. At the same time, this dependence is balanced by the success of the Foundation in meeting the needs of the firm in the community.

Replication of this model should take account of these contrary requirements. The firm(s) must have assurances not only that the funds invested in the program are used for their intended purpose but also that these investments benefit the firm. Creating an NGO is expensive (approximately 23 percent of the budget goes to operating expenses); managing a school sponsorship program directly raises issues of independence and expertise. The proposed option of managing school sponsorship through existing local NGOs will require explicit attention to

understanding the motivations of both the private sector firms and the NGOs, and to the creation of mechanisms to manage the dual requirements for control and independence.<sup>39</sup>

### *Sense of Purpose and Scope*

While the Foundation school sponsorship model stresses process, it is not free-flowing. The Foundation implements the program on behalf of a private sector firm that judges its effectiveness by its results,<sup>40</sup> meaning that the funds must be invested strategically to produce an impact. The Foundation has developed concrete requirements and guidelines for the communities to outline how Foundation activities fit into the agenda of the local organizations. Foundation staff have learned through experience that they cannot be all things to all people. The communities and the schools are very needy; limited resources spread thin can leave activities unfinished and foster dependence. Because the Foundation seeks to work with the communities as partners, the requirements are mutual. The Foundation has an obligation to respond to community requests and to comply with the obligations it accepts.

Like other NGOs working at the community level, the Foundation focuses on the importance of process and long-term commitment in building the capacity of local organizations. Private sector funding for projects like school sponsorship tends to put bounds on this methodology in terms of time and concrete impact. Open communication and negotiation are essential to resolve these “cultural” differences between the NGO and the for-profit firm. It is important to note that the Foundation sees this rigor as a strongly positive aspect of its program.

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<sup>39</sup> The motivations of the firms may be of paramount importance. The four cases we examined in the DR offer sharp contrasts. Falconbridge Dominicana created the program because the firm has to live and work in the region for at least 50 years. It has to get along with the community well enough to carry out its business. It has no option – as a mining company it cannot go somewhere else where the social conditions are more conducive for its operations. CODETEL undertook the sponsorship of a large, highly visible school in Sto. Domingo to generate positive publicity for the firm, before both the public and the government, in light of emerging competition in the market. The need was immediate, short term, and not location specific. In a case like this, the term of the government also may be a factor in setting the length of the commitment. The mandate for Timberland came from international conventions on corporate citizenship rather than needs of the company in the DR. Timberland’s investment in the DR is distinct from the other two—the firm has numerous options on where it can produce shoes and can leave if conditions are unfavorable. (We have no information on the motivation of the brewery involved in the fourth case.)

<sup>40</sup> Clearly, it’s also important to agree on what results are expected.

### **C. The Role of the Public Education System in the Model**

The Falconbridge Foundation implements the school sponsorship program on behalf of a private sector firm, but it operates within the realm of the public schools. A third party in this program is the Ministry of Education, whose interests also have to be understood and taken into account.

The guidelines for how the Foundation activities fit into the public education system are less clear than the rules for the communities. The strong political element in the Dominican system means that to some extent, this element must be “renegotiated” with each new government. According to the literature, in a successful public/private partnership the ground rules for interaction are clear and communications are open. The Foundation staff understand this requirement, as do the district and regional Ministry officials we met, but in this case the “rules” are implicit and the boundaries somewhat fuzzy. The relationship is complicated by the fact that the Foundation interacts with the Ministry *via* the local schools and district and regional offices, inserting elements of decentralization into a centralized system.

In the Foundation model, this relationship is not formalized, but it is preeminent. The sponsorship program cannot operate without the blessings of the Ministry, and the school personnel at all levels of the system – teachers, directors, district and regional officials, to the Minister herself – are in the position to facilitate, ignore, or hinder the Foundation activities. The Foundation sponsorship model emphasizes that Foundation programs enrich rather than replace the role of the Ministry. Yet, the Foundation’s work to empower the local school community, the constant presence of the staff in the schools, and spending funds directly in the local jurisdictions could be perceived as either support or a threat. The staffing of the program at the local level with Ministry personnel (teachers from the region) is a particularly strong mechanism for bridging this public/private relationship. In replication of the Foundation model on a wide scale, establishing similar staffing links between the implementing NGO and the Ministry should be considered as an option.<sup>41</sup> Limiting its activities to work with schools at the regional level and not engaging in overt policy advocacy or political activity also may smooth this link for the Foundation.

### **D. Components of the Model**

The evaluation has identified the components of the sponsorship model and the contribution of each to the results. Are all of these components equally important to the model? Do the results require adoption of the package as a whole?

The Foundation sponsorship model is a process that approaches the local school as a system. It is based on close individual contact between the school and the Foundation, with investments tailored to that school. It entails a multi-year commitment on the part of the sponsor. The model includes improvement of the physical plant, increased involvement and empowerment of the school community, especially the parents and students, and support and training for the director

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<sup>41</sup> In a small sponsorship program involving one or a few schools, the interests of the ministry beyond the individual school may be irrelevant. At the same time, as the school sponsorship experience of the Colegio Lux Mundo illustrates, the relationship between the NGO and the ministry, in the person of the director, can be fatal for the program.

and the teachers. According to the evaluation, all three components are necessary and interrelated, although their weights vary by school, and coordination among them within the school is essential. The three components may be amenable to different mechanisms for replication, however.

- Repair and equipping of the physical plant is the most expensive component of the program. It also is necessary to build local involvement in the school and to provide an adequate setting in which the rest of the activities can operate. The costs in the Foundation model are minimized; in this aspect of the program as in the others, the standard is that of the Ministry. In addition to being the most expensive component, attention to the physical plant is also the easiest for a firm to support, with the greatest potential for immediate positive publicity for the firm. As illustrated by the case of CODETEL and the brewery, however, this component alone has essentially no impact.<sup>42</sup> A firm that is interested only in this type of investment should be teamed with others to cover the developmental aspects of the program.
- The work of the Foundation in organizing the parents and students, and in building a cohesive school community is the most labor-intensive of the three components, and a distinguishing characteristic of the model. It is the basis for expectations of long-term impact and sustainability, and a link between the school sponsorship program and the overall goal of the Foundation for sustainable community development and increased local capacity. This aspect of the program is most amenable to implementation by local NGOs experienced in methodologies for grassroots development, and most difficult for firms to manage directly. Results are less visible, less controlled, and longer-term.

This component is the glue that holds the model together, yet it is likely to be the most difficult to justify to the firms. It is the “core funding” for the implementing organizations; funds are less easily tracked and less tied directly to results. As in the case of the Foundation, this component may be the prime point for input from the Ministry in support of staffing (through temporary transfer of personnel) and office space, as well as other in-kind contributions.

- Training for the teachers and directors is critical to improving the quality of education in the schools. The Foundation training program has evolved as a supplement to subject area training provided by the Ministry, with courses in school administration, and in “soft” skills like discipline and self-image. Based on this experience, the staff currently is developing a guide to basic courses needed by grade level, which could be utilized by other sponsors, in collaboration with the Ministry. Training for preschool (*pre-primaria*) teachers has been a particularly important innovation on the part of the Foundation.

The Foundation has been able to maximize its investment in training by drawing teachers from all the schools it sponsors. By filling the classes, the Foundation can justify contracting top grade trainers, a fact commented on frequently by the teachers and directors. In replicating the model, training could be managed as a separate entity. The economies of

<sup>42</sup> One of the non-sponsored schools visited by the evaluation team was less than two years old and in reasonably good condition. Unfortunately, none of the staff, and only a few children were present in the middle of a school day afternoon.

scale could be maintained by including teachers from schools with various sponsors in the same training sessions, or by providing training regionally.

Critical roles remain for the local sponsorship program, however. In the Foundation model, the sponsor meets with the teachers and directors to assess their training needs, and to ensure their attendance for scheduled classes. The Foundation staff also provide follow up in the local schools, a role that this evaluation recommends be expanded. Again, these are labor-intensive activities focused on the local level. Finally, high quality training requires funds and coordination. The Foundation and the Ministry have had difficulty in coordinating the two aspects of in-service training. Adding other sponsors to the mix will increase the importance of the coordination task.

## **E. Additional Considerations**

The commitment of the Foundation to school sponsorship in time and resources is substantial, and may be seen as a deterrent for some firms. Based on its experience during the last decade, the Foundation estimates that at least three to five years of sponsorship are required to generate measurable and lasting changes in a school. As the sponsor's relationship with the school matures, the demands on financial resources and staff time are reduced. For this reason, the Foundation has been able to expand the number of schools it sponsors without large increases in its budget.

The evaluation team observed clear benefits in the fact that the Foundation sponsors many schools in the same region, in fostering exchanges among schools and communities, in economies of scale in training and oversight, and in the potential impact in the district and region in building local capacity for decentralization of public school administration. Calculation of the ideal size for a local sponsorship program will involve a balancing of various factors, including budget and maximum utilization of personnel. The Foundation program started small and expanded gradually as the staff gained experience, through trial and error. New organizations, drawing on the Foundation model, have the advantage of this experience but, like Timberland, may want to begin cautiously.

Two additional points are raised about the specific characteristics of the Foundation model. First, the model is labor intensive, and the evaluation points repeatedly to the importance of the direct and frequent interaction between the Foundation staff and the school community. Can this element be reduced? According to the Foundation Executive Director, the amount of direct contact with the schools is much lower now than it was in 1990, when the program was initiated, in part because the need for direct contact is reduced with time and in part because of adjustments in the Foundation model. Further, the model is being applied successfully in La Vega with much less staff support than in Bonaire. At the same time, this contact and the response to each school as a unique entity are a central strength of the model and important to its capacity to use its funds efficiently.

Second, school sponsorship is only one part of the larger Foundation program for local community development. To what extent are the results of school sponsorship dependent on this larger context? At the local level, the school sponsorship program functions independently. In most communities, it is the principal, and in many cases, only activity of the Foundation. The work with the school necessarily opens avenues into the community (since a part of the purpose

is to strengthen the school as a community institution) and leads to petitions for support on many fronts. It is at this point that the clear sense of what the Foundation can and cannot fruitfully support is critical. Increasingly, the Foundation is more directly focused on education as its core activity. At the same time, the evaluation found that the characteristics and needs of the community affect the results obtained by the Foundation in the school. The model appears to be more easily applied in rural communities, for example, than in more transient peri-urban and urban areas. This factor may affect replication, as the activities with the school community are adjusted to the requirements and circumstances of various urban populations.

## **F. Intangible Factors**

Other characteristics of the Foundation program, like the integrity of the staff, the style of leadership, and quality and dedication with which both managers and staff approach their work with the communities also contribute to the success of the program. In spite of the fact that the Foundation has been operating for ten years, the staff do not treat their jobs as routine. The Executive Director interacts comfortably with both the school community and the corporate and Ministry officials; her personal style contributes to bridging the potential breakdowns in communications between the various parties. The respect afforded the program suggests a strong sense of integrity in the operations of the Foundation, in a situation that could easily be exploited for individual gain. These personal characteristics of managers and staff are important in facilitating the public/private relationship where the norms for joint activities are not clear. They also are essential in maintaining trust and respect in the local community.

These intangible factors are difficult to build into a replication of the model. Recognizing their significance points to the necessity of including mechanisms for “quality control” at all levels of interaction, and to provide checks and balances to ensure integrity and ethical behavior. The Foundation has systems in place for accounting, planning, monitoring, reporting, and personnel management, and it submits to annual audits. These management systems, which are often anathemas in social service activities, are essential to the corporate world and contribute to trust in public/private relationships.

The Foundation school sponsorship program rests on the objective of increasing the capacity of the local school community to manage the school and to produce quality public education for their children. Replicating the essence of the model as well as the substance requires a shared commitment to this goal and a mutual understanding and acceptance of how it matches the self-interests of all the parties involved.

A final consideration is raised concerning replication. The evaluation has shown that improvements in educational quality lag behind involvements in the school and learning environment. What other ingredients are needed as this model is replicated throughout the country to speed up the impact on educational quality? If the Foundation, through the local communities, provides and maintains an environment conducive to learning, is there an additional role perhaps for the Ministry in increasing quality and student achievement? Alternatively, should the model be pushed further toward decentralization to achieve the intended changes? Both the continuing evolution of the Foundation program and the variations on this model through replication should provide insights into these questions in the future.



## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Conclusions

The school sponsorship program of the Falconbridge Foundation has produced impressive results, recognized and appreciated by the broad array of stakeholders within the local school community, the broader regional community, the teachers' union, and the Ministry of Education. It has been lauded by international donors, and other national and multinational firms have sought guidance from the Foundation in attempts to duplicate its successes. A part of the motivation for this evaluation was to identify key components of the model with an eye toward replication.

The physical impact of the program is clearly visible. Although the sponsored schools are public schools, they are attractive, clean, and in good repair. The classrooms have desks, blackboards, books, and wall posters. The teachers are on-the-job. The less tangible impact in terms of local commitment, involvement, and pride is immediately apparent in visits to the schools and interviews with students, parents, and staff. And, the scope of the program is not small. The Foundation sponsors 100 public schools, affecting 73,000 students and 1,600 teachers. It plans to expand to 120 schools over the next four years.

The Falconbridge Foundation sponsorship program operates within the public education system. Rather than creating an alternative or parallel system, it reinforces the public system by investing in the structures and processes outlined in the new Education Law and the *Plan Decenal de Educación*, the 1992 ten-year plan for educational reform. Accepting the national policy and administrative framework, the sponsorship program focuses on the local school and its community, working to build the framework for the decentralization called for in this plan.

### *Strengths*

The core strength of the program is improvements in the school environment, both in the building and in the school community. No single factor is the key to these successes. The Foundation works with the local system as a whole in a process of change. The evolution of the process and the investments made are to some extent unique in each setting. The purpose is not only to support an environment conducive to learning but also to build local capacity to maintain and demand these standards. Key components of this approach include:

- Each school is treated as unique and receives individual and direct attention from Foundation staff. There is no pre-determined level of investment in the school or fixed package of services. The process is built on community involvement and requests.
- The Foundation deals with the school community as a partner. The standards, expectations, and requirements of the program are clear. The Foundation treats the local staff, parents, and students with respect. The Foundation is open and compliant; it follows through on its commitments and its investments. If the community does not respond, the local activities are put on hold.

- The most expensive investment in most schools is in the repair and equipping of the school building. The purpose is to bring the school to an acceptable level of accommodation based on the standards set by the Ministry. Repair of the building alone is insufficient, but it is a prerequisite for other investments in the school community.
- Training for school directors and teachers, and for parents and students has been important in both informational and social terms. The results are evident in the behavior of all these groups. The breadth and the quality of the training have affected self-image, community interaction, and organizational competence.

The members of the school community talk about the benefits for them – improved attendance, community pride, reduced problems in discipline and violence. There are potential broader benefits as well. By focusing on the local school and implementing the changes called for in the education law, the Foundation provides a test of the costs and benefits of these activities (e.g., student councils, School for Parents, literacy training). Over time, the grassroots approach could increase the pressure for decentralization of school administration and for improved services.

### *Challenges*

The process of change is not complete, however. The goals of the education program of the Foundation go beyond changes in the school environment to changes in the quality of the education received by the students. The program seeks improved academic performance, higher rates of promotion, and lower dropout rates. The teachers are expected to be more effective and to employ innovative teaching methods in the classroom.

A deepening crisis in the quality of primary education in the Dominican Republic in the 1980s, prompted the outcry of civil society and the private sector for reform. On tests administered by UNESCO throughout Latin American in 1995, students from the Dominican Republic performed worse than all other countries except one. Dropout rates remain high and an unacceptable number of students become stalled in the primary schools well into their teens.

The evaluation suggests that, while changes in the sponsored schools have produced some improvement in quality, the remaining challenge to move beyond the low academic standards that prevail in the country will require direct attention to the academic issues. Parents are involved in the schools but they are not focused on what the children are learning; there is no demand for improved achievement. The teachers in the sponsored schools have benefited from exposure to innovative teaching methods, but in most cases are not using them. Results of national tests, although of questionable reliability, show poor academic performance throughout the public education system, and the sponsored schools, although slightly better in some areas, match this norm.

A second challenge concerns sustainability and institutionalization. The Foundation's school sponsorship program has made significant strides in involvement and empowerment of the local community, but important steps remain. The parents and school administrators formulate plans but depend on the resources of the Foundation to carry them out. In general, they have not been successful in garnering independent resources, and the Foundation does not allow them to control the expenditure of funds directly. Both steps will be necessary to achieve the Foundation objective of self-sufficiency at the local level.

Sustainability and dependence also remain an issue in the relationship between the Foundation and the Ministry. The Ministry does not have the funds or organization to implement the educational reform program. Recognizing that new models of institutions and funding are needed to bring primary education in the Dominican Republic to the levels required by international integration, tapping the resources of the private sector, and building public/private partnerships is an attractive option. But, the institutional framework is not in place to manage this relationship. The Falconbridge Foundation has been sensitive to the tensions involved in operating as a private organization within the public institution, but the management of this relationship remains dependent on the quality of the leadership and staff of the Foundation.

## **B. Recommendations**

The recommendations flow from the discussion of challenges.

First, more emphasis should be given to the academic aspect of the sponsorship program. Several actions are recommended to move forward in these terms:

- Assist schools in developing and implementing a systemic plan to address student achievement. Recent studies suggest that academic improvement does not come about through piecemeal actions. Components of a systemic plan include staffing, instruction, professional development, instructional resources, and accountability, as well as the physical plant, school management, school climate, and parent/community involvement.
- Devise a strategy for the improvement of classroom instruction reflective of the teaching methodology presented in the teacher training workshops. The Foundation may use pilot experiences in a few schools as models that other teachers can observe. Direct technical assistance could be offered to teachers in the classrooms in application of methods. Teachers may be able to form teams within the schools to observe and advise each other on applications of the methods.
- To increase accountability, adopt a tool to assess student achievement twice a year, and make the schools responsible for the results of these tests. The Foundation should report the performance levels to the parents, using the test results to expose the community to the issues of educational quality and to generate pressure for improvement and higher standards. The Foundation, with the school community, can use these results to monitor progress and decide what resources are needed to improve performance. Given the failures of the national performance testing, the Foundation could take the lead in implementing this aspect of the reform, as they have in others.
- In addition to performance testing, assist the schools in collecting additional reliable data as indicators of the quality of the educational experience (e.g., attendance, coverage, dropouts, etc.). Again, an important aspect of this process will be presentation and interpretation of this information for the parents, teachers, and students to build community concern and action in this arena.

Second, the Foundation should continue to deepen its efforts for local empowerment and decentralization.

- Additional support is needed to increase the capacity of the school community (especially the parent associations) to raise funds independently and locally, to take the lead in confronting state agencies and to control decisions about how funds are allocated. As the sponsorship program in a school matures, the oversight of the Foundation in terms of investments in the school itself is reduced. Ideally, in the future, the Foundation could become one of several sources that the community would tap for support of the school, with the community devising and managing a plan for local administration.
- The decentralization of school administration called for in the *Plan Decenal* has not been realized. In the future, the Foundation might consider working with the Ministry to implement it on a pilot basis in the Bonao and La Vega districts.

Finally, the Foundation could play a leadership role in replication of its model for school sponsorship in other regions of the country. The tools developed by the Foundation for the local school communities (e.g., questionnaires and forms for initial needs assessments, letters of collaboration, guide to procedures, training needs assessment, etc.) should serve as training tools and guides as new organizations enter this arena. Similarly, the draft training module developed on the basis of Foundation experience can be the starting point for establishing the training component of the program, in collaboration with the Ministry. Third, the Foundation can serve as a guide in understanding the cost structure of a sponsorship program and in recommending a progression for introduction of various activities to the schools.

## **APPENDICES**

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## **Appendix A. Scope of Work for the Evaluation of Falconbridge Foundation School Sponsorship Program**

### **Background**

In the Dominican Republic, a major constraint to sustained economic growth is the lack of quality education. Dominican education lags behind that of other countries with similar economic conditions, in terms of the most visible indicators such as literacy, enrollment, repetition, and desertion. Equity is still a challenge, particularly for children in rural areas. USAID/DR feels there is a need to restore and build civil society commitment to improving public education, to increase public and private expenditure in educational improvement, and to strengthen the participation of families and communities in the entire educational process.

Access to quality education is vital in reducing income inequalities in the Dominican Republic, as well as increasing entrepreneurship. The deterioration in the quality of education limits employment opportunities and makes the country less competitive in the global market. Everyday advances in technology and marketing place greater demands on the labor force for Free Trade Zones, agro-industrial enterprises, and resort areas. Dominican enterprise is beginning to understand the vital linkage between improved education, more skilled workers, lower training costs, and a greater competitive advantage. Improvements in education represent a strategic, long-term investment for the business community.

There are several previous experiences of private business involvement in formal education in the Dominican Republic, though only a very few companies have followed a long-term approach. Most have maintained the philanthropic attitude of “helping the poor” through donations and responses to requests without a strategic plan. Among those experiences of private investment for improvement of public schools, three have been particularly well designed and implemented: EDUCA’s PIPE project, E. Leon Jimenez’s Proyecto de Desarrollo Comunitario (PRODECO), and the Falconbridge Foundation’s (FF) Programa de Apadrinamiento de Escuelas.

Whereas the EDUCA and the PRODECO initiatives have not expanded significantly since their inception, the Falconbridge Foundation has gone from one to a hundred sponsored schools over the past decade. Moreover, recent preliminary research by DevTech, Inc. and the USAID/LAC strategy team pointed to a perceived improvement in the quality of the Falconbridge sponsored schools. The Foundation has conducted its own periodic project evaluations, but no comprehensive study combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies has been undertaken to date.

### **Purpose of Education**

Through its Education strategy, USAID/DR seeks to assist the private business sector in linking up with communities in order to improve Basic Education. USAID/DR wishes to explore a school sponsorship model that will tie in with the *Competitiveness of Dominican Enterprise* Intermediate Result that is a part of the Economic Growth Strategic Objective, together with *Improved Basic Education*.

USAID/DR's interest in evaluating the Falconbridge Foundation school sponsorship experience lies in documenting a probable success story where a public/private partnership has resulted in the improvement of education for a considerable number of students in the public school system. The Falconbridge Foundation asserts that it has:

- enhanced educational quality, defined in terms of student appropriation of basic skills, improved teacher/student/parents interaction in the learning process, and an efficient use of resources at the school level;
- increased access for both girls and boys, in both urban and rural areas;
- promoted the implementation of *Plan Decenal* reforms, such as decentralization through community participation, classroom application of the new curriculum, enhanced teacher training, school based management, and student involvement in decision-making.

For the period 1989-2001, the Foundation has kept scrupulous records of its interventions and activities within the school sponsorship program, all of which will be available to the evaluation team immediately upon signature of the contract. There are also several external studies on Falconbridge Inc. and on the Foundation that are easily available at Dominican university libraries. Practically all MOE and Falconbridge personnel involved in the project over the past decade are currently available for interviews.

Unfortunately, the Foundation does not have baseline data on student achievement for the schools it has sponsored since 1989. There is a lack of scholastic achievement data for comparison between Falconbridge and non-sponsored students since the implementation of national testing in 1994, due to deficiencies in Ministry-collected educational indicators. One of the most important components of the evaluation methodology will be the alternative means for obtaining quantitative data.

If the foundation has indeed achieved the above improvements as compared to similar schools in the public educational system, it remains to be determined:

1. What does the "model" consist of? What are the necessary interventions to achieve it?
2. Is it replicable in other parts of the country and the rest of the world?
3. Can it be successfully replicated with reasonable investment?
4. Can the model function with more than one sponsoring entity at a time (i.e., NGO/private business team, MOE/NGO)?

***Scope of Work***

USAID/LAC-EHR requests BEPS technical assistance to initiate a program evaluation of the Falconbridge Foundation school model. To this end, BEPS is requested to propose and field a team of experts that will do the following:

1. Establish a short- and long-term strategy for assessment of the Falconbridge Foundation's school program.
2. Design and implement evaluation methods and tools that will establish comparative benchmarks for assessing Falconbridge's effectiveness and efficacy across comparative, illustrative variables as student performance, teacher training, curriculum, community involvement, and investment/cost.
3. Analyze and systematize documentation of the Falconbridge model in a manner that facilitates comparative research, public examination and understanding.

**Deliverables**

In the process of addressing the aforementioned SOW, USAID/LAC-HER requests the following deliverables:

1. Appropriate briefings and debriefings of USAID/LAC-HER and USAID/DR technical staff as required;
2. A final report which will contain strategies, methods, tools, results, and corresponding recommendations for follow-on studies and actions for both USAID and the Falconbridge Foundation. The report will include:
  - Recommendations for FF to optimize its educational investment and continual improvement of its model.
  - Detailed recommendations for development of a "how-to" manual documenting the Falconbridge model that may be used by interested sponsors and the MOE's Programa de Apadrinamiento de Escuelas.
  - A first draft of the evaluation shall be presented jointly to USAID/DR and Falconbridge officials for review and comments. Written comments to be incorporated into the final document should be received within three working days of the presentation. The final report will be presented, both in hard copy and electronically to both institutions within a week of receipt of the comments.

**Dates for Implementation**

The Mission requires that this evaluation be conducted ASAP, since a major component of its new strategy depends on replication of a school sponsorship model. The performance period should begin immediately, and should take as long as necessary provided the end report is ready by the end of July.



***Budget***

Budget will be negotiated once the final SOW has been written.

***Supervision***

David Evans is the designated LAC/HER CTO for this sub-task. Ms. Neici M. Zeller is designated as USAID/DR Project Liaison officer for this evaluation activity. Ms. Arelis Rodriguez will be the Falconbridge Foundation contact.

***Additional***

Attached please find a copy of the Foundation's proposed Scope of Work for this evaluation. The Foundation wishes to contribute the services of a researcher as local counterpart for the evaluation team. Miscellaneous services, such as transportation to and from the schools and minimal clerical support in the Santo Domingo Foundation offices, would also be available.

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## Appendix B. Interview Protocols

### SCHOOL DIRECTOR

1. What is your full name?
2. For how long have you been the director of this school? For how long have you been a school director (all schools)? What is your training (normal school, university, other)? For how long have you been a teacher?
3. Please provide some general statistical information about the school: total number of students; number of students per shift; gender distribution of students; how many grade-groups; how many students per grade.
4. Can you please give us some information about: student attendance (do you find it high/low)? Can you give us the total attendance for every day during the past week? What are the main causes of student absenteeism? What do you do about it? What is the overall student dropout rate?
5. Can we now talk about student performance: how do you rate the student body's overall performance? How do you feel about it? What is the passing/repetition rate? Which grades have better/worse passing/repetition rates? Any reasons? Tell us about student achievement of basic literacy/numeracy skills. By which grade have they fully acquired them (late/early)? How do you feel about it?
6. Please tell us about your school performance in the last national 8<sup>th</sup> grade tests: percentage passed on first sitting, second sitting, percentage flunked? Were the results better/worse than previous year? What do you think are the reasons for the results?
7. Please tell us about your teachers: How many teachers do you have? Gender distribution? What is their training level (bachilleres, normalistas, licenciados)? How many years in the teaching profession on average? What is their attendance and absenteeism rate? How satisfied are you with their overall performance?
8. Please describe for us your school management policy and practices. How do you conduct planning and programming? How often do you meet with your teachers? How do you evaluate your teachers? How do you provide feedback on performance? How do you handle conflicts?
9. Can you please summarize for us the support you receive from the MOE - training, supervision, textbooks, school meals, school construction/ maintenance, furniture, equipment, etc. How do you rate the support provided by the MOE?
10. Please summarize the support provided to the school by the Falconbridge Foundation. How do you rate the support provided?
11. What support have you, as an individual school director, received from the Foundation – training, guidance, encouragement, books, study visits, etc.? How has this support helped in

your work? Has your leadership style changed as a result of your association with the Foundation staff? Can you describe some examples?

12. Can we please go on a tour of the school grounds and classrooms so that we may see some of the work done with the Foundation's support?

Additional topics discussed in reference to the school community:

1. How was the decision made to seek sponsorship from the Foundation? (when, who took the initiative and who was involved, what was the process?)
2. How is the decision made about what requests to make to the Foundation?
3. Discussion of the relationship between the director and the parent association – e.g., what role does s/he play in the meetings, in setting the agenda, in initiating actions
4. Discussion of his/her personal relationship with the Foundation – who is the main contact, does s/he attend workshops or training, how has the relationship changed over time, etc.?
5. Changes in the school as a result of sponsorship – most important impact, in any
6. Next steps

## **PARENT ASSOCIATION**

1. Discussion of the process of becoming sponsored – who took the lead, who was involved, when did it happen, what were the steps, what were the problems?
2. What changes have you seen in the school as a result of sponsorship – with the school itself, the parent association, the children, the faculty?
3. What supports has the school received from the Foundation? What has been the most important and why? (with probes – building repairs, library, special lectures, psychologist, TV, Escuela de Padres)
4. What impact has sponsorship had on the students? On the quality of education? On what the students learn in the school?
5. What problems has the association had in dealing with the Foundation?
6. Discuss the organization of the parent association: elections and officers, meetings of board and the general assembly, men and women as participants, fund raising, management of funds, projects and activities, relationship to the Foundation – who does the association have contact with, how often, for what – what is the process for deciding on requests to the Foundation and on actually making the requests. What assistance has the parent association itself received from the Foundation?

7. Are there other groups or individuals in the community supporting the school in some way? Does any of this have to do with sponsorship by the Foundation?
8. What kind of interaction does the parent association have with the student council?
9. What are the next steps – plans for the future? What is the next request that will be made to the Foundation? What will happen to the school (and the parent association) after the sponsorship of the Foundation ends?

### **STUDENT COUNCIL**

1. Describe the organization of the council – how long have they been members, talk about the election, how often do they meet, etc.
2. What are their activities? What have they accomplished? How did they organize themselves to get these things done?
3. What has their experience been with the Foundation? (Probes: attendance at workshops, competitions/visits with other schools, meetings with Foundation staff).
4. What has it meant to them to have the school sponsored by the Foundation – how do they see this relationship?
5. How have they benefited from the experience of being members of the student council? What have they learned? What advice do they have for the next council?
6. What kinds of problems do they see in the school now?
7. Do they do any activities with the parent association?
8. What people have provided them with guidance, assistance?
9. What are their plans for the future – individually and in terms of projects for the school?

## Appendix C. Schools Visited

### *Sponsored by the Falconbridge Foundation*

#### **Monseñor Nouel (Bona)**

<b>School</b>	<b>Director</b>
Antonio Liranzo Batista	Ana Jacinta Alejo
Benito R. Alberto	Isabel Coronado'
Boca de Juma	Cruz Maria Ramirez
Caracol A	Margarita Osoria
Jayaco	Carmen Teodora Rosario
La Ceiba	María A. Jiménez
Los Amapolos	Digna de Jesus
Los Anegadizos	Maria P. Alcon
Los Palmaritos	Maria M. Ramírez
Los Platanitos	Sergio Sánchez
Manuel Aybar	Eleodoro Amador
Maria Batista (Juma Adentro)	Paulina Cabrera
Nuestra Sra de Guadalupe	Ernesto Blanco
Pedro Antonio Bobea	Gloria Irsa Sanchez

#### **La Vega**

<b>School</b>	<b>Director</b>
Burende	Marcos De León
Bellas Artes	Lorenzo Gómez Grullón
El Tanque	Fernando A. Alvarez
Juan Pablo Duarte	Julián Nunez
Las Canas	Sergio Aracena
Maria Auxiliadora	Rosa Espinal
Padre Lamarche	Rosina Angeles
Ponton	Teolinda Francisco
Ramon del Urbe	Iluminada Rosario
San Martin de Porres	Sor Mercedes Ortiz

***Non-Sponsored Schools*****Monseñor Nouel (Bonaó)**

<b>School</b>	<b>Director</b>
Arroyo Vuelta	Isabel Altagracia Galvez
Aurora Nuñez	Ms. Dennys
Barrio Nuevo Sonador	Juni de la Cruz

**La Vega**

<b>School</b>	<b>Director</b>
Bayacanes	Jose Bismar Alejo
Las Martínez	Alfonso Holguin
Los Rincones de Guaco	Marcos Acosta

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**Appendix D. Individuals Consulted*****United States Agency for International Development/Dominican Republic***

Elena Brineman, Mission Director  
Lissette Dumit, Rule of Law Specialist  
Don Harrington, General Development Officer  
Neici Zeller, Education Team Leader

***Falconbridge Foundation***

Martín Alberto, Project Promoter  
Puro Candido Blanco, Consultant to the Foundation on the Strengthening of Parent and Friend Associations  
Lesbia Brea de Castillo, Education Advisor and General Coordinator of Democratic Initiatives  
Felix Echavarría, Director of School Greenhouses in the La Vega Province  
Carlos Jiménez Briceño, Director of the School Environment Program  
Faby Manzano de Aguasvivas, Director of Communications  
Enrique W. Lithgow, President of the Falconbridge Foundation and General Manager of the Falconbridge Company  
Arelis M. Rodriguez de Ortiz, Executive Director

***Dominican Republic Ministry of Education***

Maria Espinoza Ayala, La Vega Regional Advisor  
Bolivar Gomez, Bonao District Director  
Mercedes Hernandez Caamano, Preschool Education Consultant, World Bank  
Rafael Hernandez, La Vega Oeste District Supervisor  
Rocio Hernandez Mella, Basic Education  
Juana Caridad Lopez, La Vega Regional Director  
Ezequiel Valdez de la Cruz, records and statistics  
Leo Valeiron, National Tests Office

***Dominican Teachers Association, ADP***

Valentin de Jesus Marte (in Bonao)

***Inter-American Development Bank, IADB***

Dr. Richard Pelczar

***Timberland Company***

Jorge Guzman

***Colegio Lux Mundi***

Maria Amelia León  
Leonor de Bancalari

## Appendix E. Student Achievement: Eighth Grade National Exam, 2000

Student testing, with valid and reliable standardized instruments, is widely accepted as a quantitative indicator of the quality of schools academically. The National Tests administered to all students at the end of the fourth and eighth grades were introduced in the Dominican Republic as a part of the education reforms of the *Plan Decenal*. They have been widely criticized and their validity as an absolute measure of what students know is questionable. As a comparative measure across schools, however, the scores provide some indication of the relative achievement of students in schools sponsored by the Falconbridge Foundation. The following analysis uses data on the results of eighth grade exams for the year 2000, provided to the evaluation team by the National Tests Office in the Ministry of Education.

The analysis focuses on differences in the average (mean) scores on the Spanish and math exams for students in various categories of schools. The primary comparisons are made between the schools sponsored by the Foundation, other public schools, and private schools. Controls are presented by gender, province and education district, rural/urban school classification, and student age. The total numbers of students included in the analysis are:

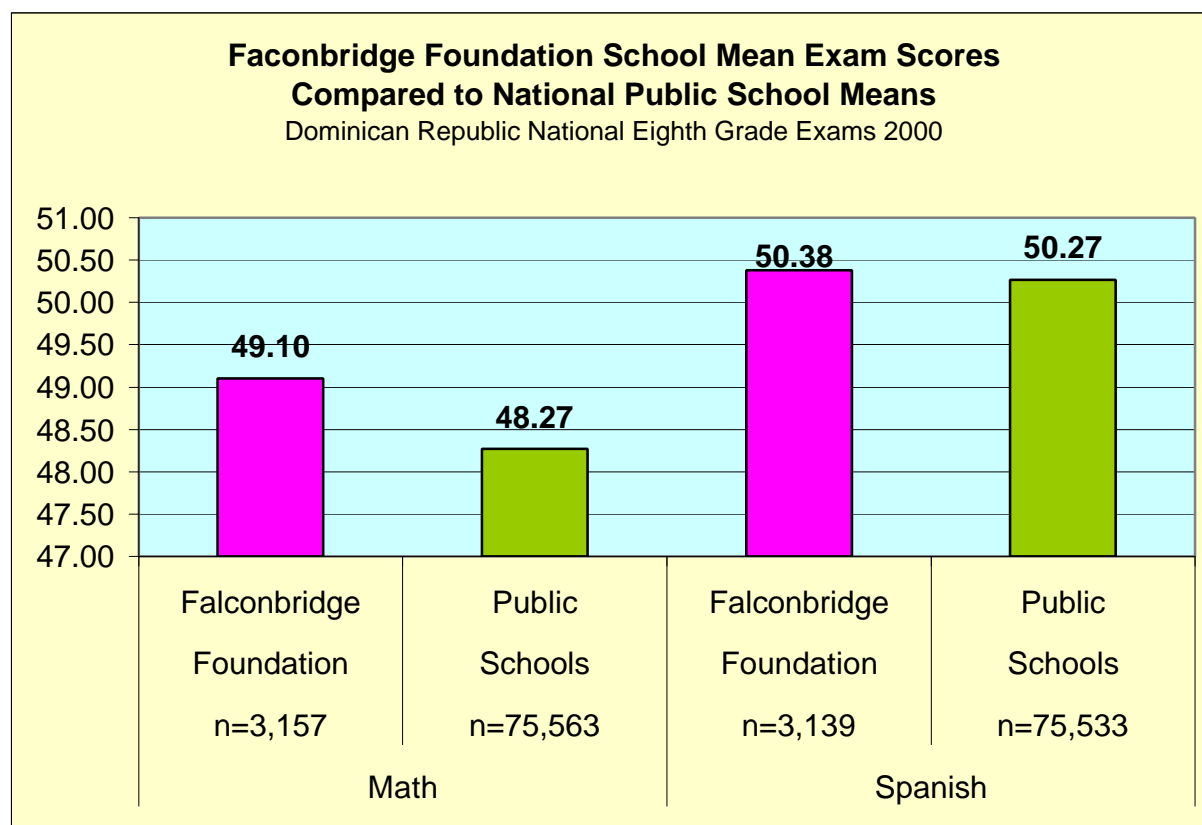
<b>Foundation-sponsored schools:</b>	<b>3,157</b>
Other public schools:	75,563
Private schools:	25,758

### A. National Public School Means

Eighth grade students participating in the Falconbridge Foundation Sponsorship (FFS) Program have higher mean scores in both math and Spanish than other public school (DRPS) students who participated in the Dominican Republic Eighth Grade Exam administered during summer 2000. These findings are statistically significant ( $>.001$ ) for math but not for Spanish.

As can be seen in Chart 1, both FFS and DRPS students performed better in Spanish than in math. This is consistent with observations made by the evaluation team in the FFS schools. Typically, teachers that were observed teaching Spanish employed more constructivist methodologies than math teachers, who tended to use more whole classroom instruction (“talk and chalk”). This tendency was consistent in the lower grades as well as the upper grades. As shown by recent studies in school reform in United States schools, constructivist methodologies tend to result in higher student achievement.



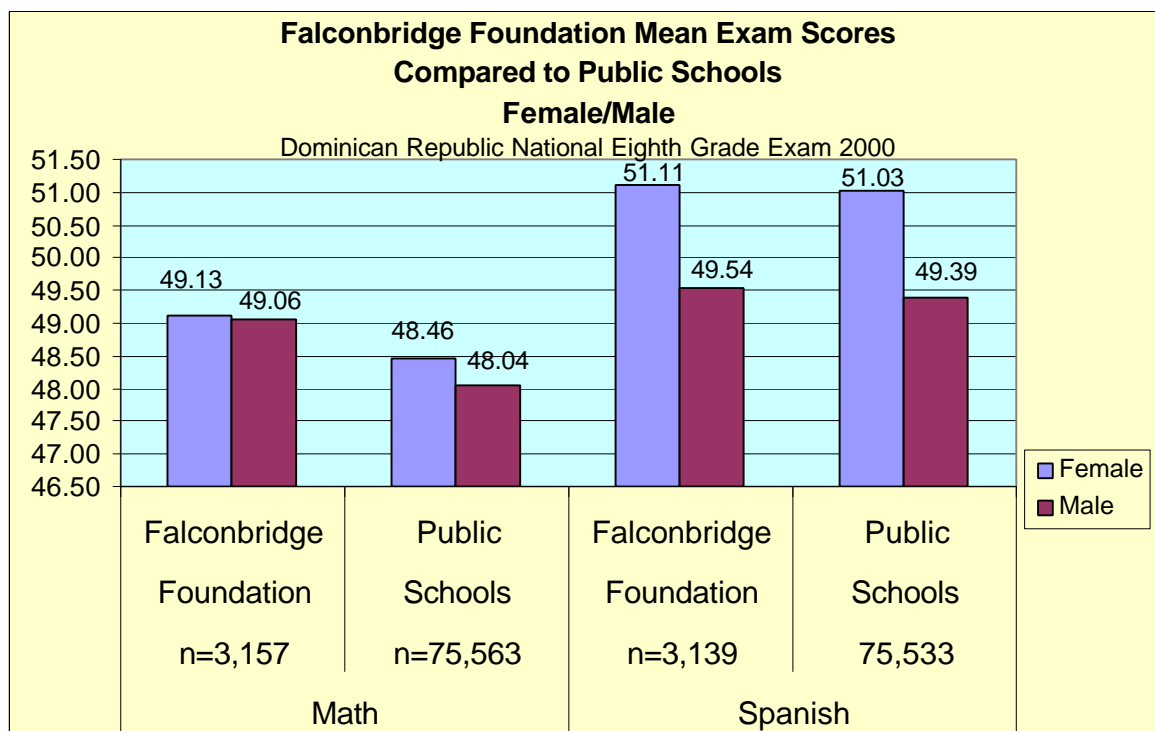
**Chart 1**

In comparison to eighth grade students in FFS schools and DRPS schools, students participating in Private Schools (PS) obtained higher mean scores in math and Spanish. PS students (n=25,758) had a mean score of 51.69 in math and a mean score of 53.18 in Spanish.

### ***Female/Male Achievement***

A larger number of females than males participated in the Dominican Republic Eighth Grade Exam administered during summer 2000. Of the students participating in the math exam, 53.5 percent were female and 46.5 percent were male. The percentages were similar for the Spanish exam (Females = 53.4 percent; Males = 46.6 percent). Both FFS and DRPS eighth grade females outperformed eighth grade males in both math and Spanish exams. Furthermore, in addition to outperforming male students in FFS schools, females participating in FFS schools outperformed female and male students in both math and Spanish in DRPS schools.

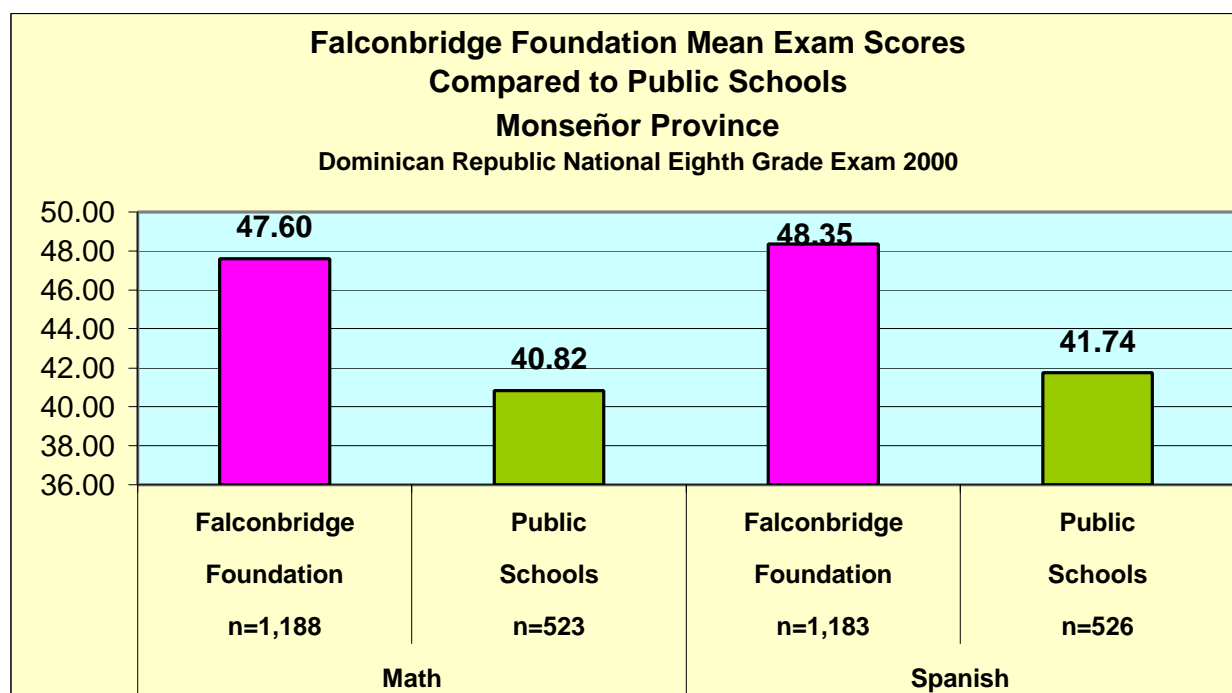
In FFS schools, the mean score for females in math is 49.13, while the mean score for males is 49.06. For this same group, the mean score in Spanish is 51.11 for females while the score for males is 49.54. In DRPS schools, the mean score in math for females is 49.06, while the mean score for males is 48.04. In Spanish, DRPS females have a mean score of 49.54, and DRPS males have a mean score of 49.39. The gap between female and male achievement is greater in Spanish than it is in math for both FFS students and DRPS students.

**Chart 2**

Females in private schools also scored higher in math and Spanish than males. The mean score in math for PS females is 51.79 and for males it is 51.57. For females in private schools, the mean score in Spanish is 54.01 and for males it is 52.25. As with FFS and DRPS students, the gap in the mean scores between males and females in private schools is greater in Spanish than in math.

### ***Monseñor Nouel Province***

As a whole, eighth grade students in the 60 FFS schools in Monseñor Nouel obtained a higher mean score in Math and Spanish than students in DRPS schools in the same Province (sig>.001). As shown in Chart 3, the difference in student mean scores between FFS schools and DRPS schools in Monseñor Nouel province is about seven points in math and Spanish. The student mean score for FFS schools in math in Monseñor Nouel is 47.60, while the mean score for students in DRPS schools is 40.82. The mean score for students in FFS schools in Spanish in Monseñor Nouel is 48.35 while the mean for students in DRPS is 41.74.

**Chart 3**

This large difference between the mean scores of FFS students and DRPS students in math and Science suggests that it may be due to the services provided by the Falconbridge Foundation to its sponsored schools that are not available in other DRPS schools. However, because baseline data do not exist against which to compare the mean scores of students in FFS schools from the inception of FFS services to the present, it is not possible to attribute the difference in mean scores entirely to the FFS intervention.

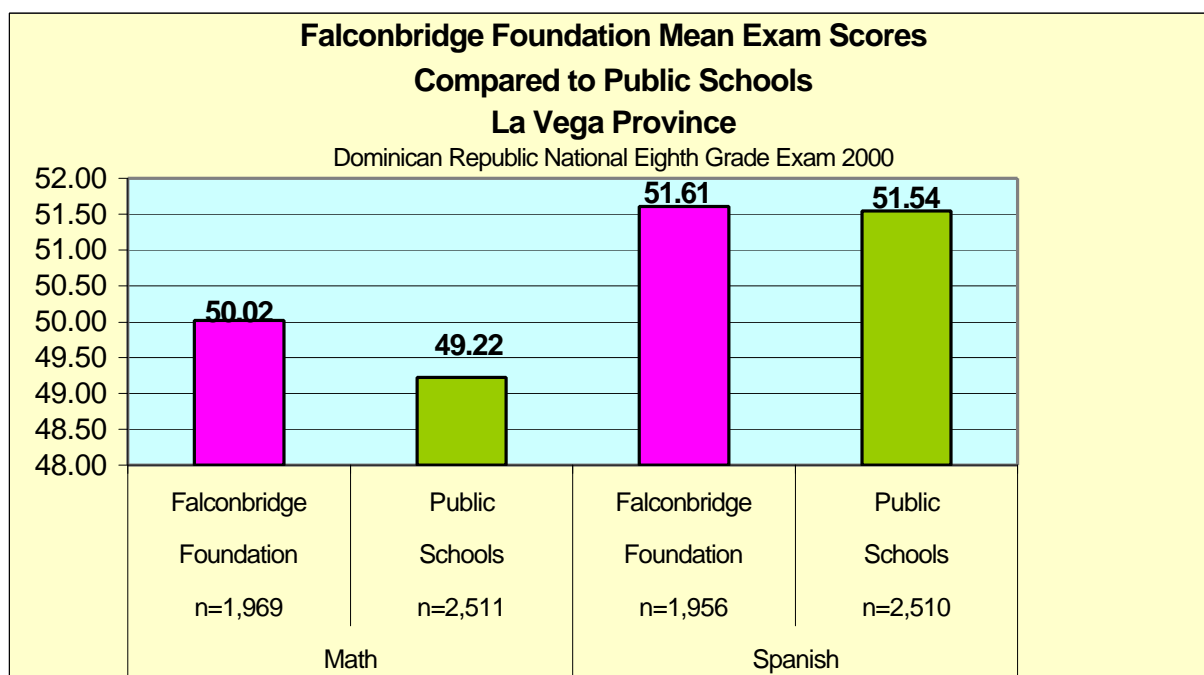
It is also of special interest that among the DRPS provinces in all the Dominican Republic, Monseñor Nouel province ranked last, obtaining the lowest student mean scores in both math (40.82) and Spanish (41.74) compared to the mean scores in math (48.27) and Spanish (50.27) for all DRPS provinces. The fact that eighth grade students in the Falconbridge Foundation sponsored schools in Monseñor Nouel obtained a mean score in math (47.60) and Spanish (48.35) close to the DRPS national average while the DRPS students in the same province did not, suggests that students in FFS schools in this province tend to benefit to a large extent from the Falconbridge Foundation sponsorship. As a frame of reference, students in private schools in Monseñor Nouel province have a mean score of 56.07 in math and a mean score of 56.09 in Spanish.

### ***La Vega Province***

Unlike some schools in Monseñor Nouel province that have received sponsorship support from the Foundation for over a decade, schools in La Vega Province area have received sponsorship services from the Foundation only since 1998. Like eighth grade students in Foundation-sponsored schools in Monseñor Nouel, eighth grade students in Falconbridge-sponsored schools within La Vega province obtained higher mean scores in math and Spanish than the DPRS

cohort. Moreover, both FFS and DRPS students in La Vega also obtained higher mean scores in Spanish than in math.

**Chart 4**



Unlike the large difference in mean scores in math and Spanish in Monseñor Nouel, the mean scores of eighth grade students in Foundation sponsored schools in La Vega are not much different than the mean scores of the DPRS cohort. However, students in FFS and DRPS schools in La Vega, as a group, scored higher in both math and Spanish than students in FFS schools in Monseñor Nouel. As seen in Chart 4 below, the mean score for students in FFS schools was 50.02 in math and 49.22 in Spanish. For students in DRPS schools, the mean score in math was 51.61 and the mean score in Spanish was 51.54.

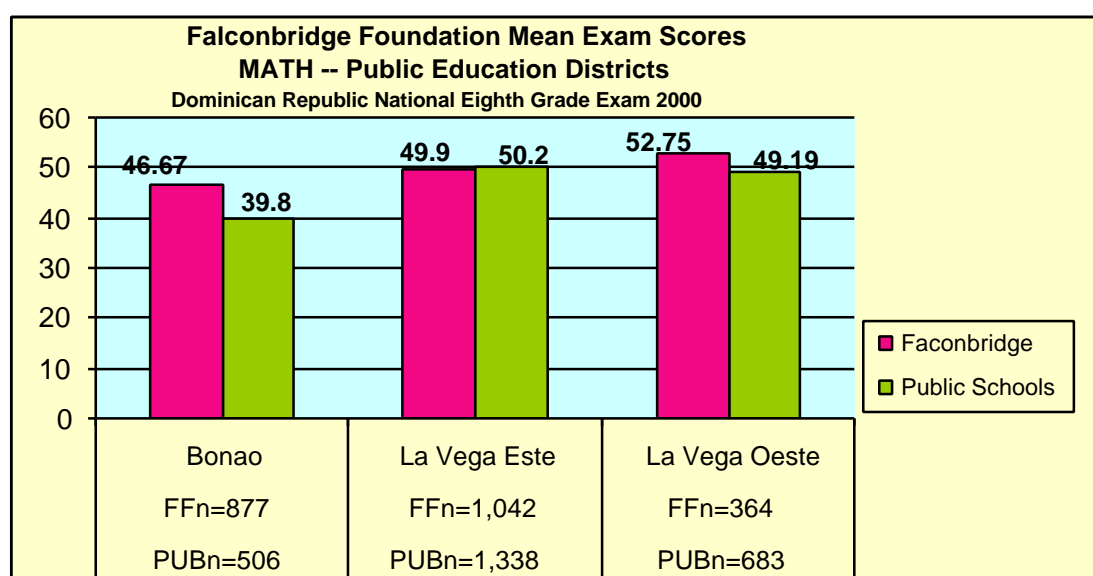
As a frame of reference, eighth grade students in private schools (PS) in La Vega have a higher mean score in Math (54.52; n=501) and Language (54.48; n=493) than FFS and DRPS students in the same province. The mean scores in math and Spanish of PS students in La Vega are also higher than the mean scores of students in Monseñor Nouel.

## **B. Education Districts**

There are ninety-nine (99) Education Districts in the Dominican Republic. These Education Districts serve as primary administrative units for public school campuses within their jurisdiction. Education District personnel also collaborate with school campus personnel in meeting the needs of each school campus within the district, such as providing them with instructional materials, professional development activities, etc. The Falconbridge Foundation sponsors public schools in six of these education districts: Bonao, East La Vega, West La Vega, Jarabacoa, Piedra Blanca, and Constanza.

The mean score in math for students in Foundation sponsored schools in these Education Districts are as follows: Bonao, 46.67 (n=877); East La Vega, 49.9 (n=1,338); West La Vega, 52.75 (n=364); Jarabacoa, 51.27 (264); Piedra Blanca, 50.16 (305); and Constanza, 45.8 (286). In contrast, the corresponding mean scores in math for the DRPS cohort group are as follows: Bonao, 39.8 (n=506); East La Vega, 50.2 (n=1,042); West La Vega, 49.19 (n=364); Jarabacoa, 44.24 (n=229); Piedra Blanca, 62.1 (n=20); and, Constanza, 48.67 (n=259). A comparison of the three FFS and DRPS Education Districts with the largest number of students participating in the math exam are shown in the chart below.

**Chart 5**



There are several points of interest in comparing the math mean scores of FFS and DRPS students for the Education Districts discussed above. However, of special interest is that the difference between the math mean scores of students in FFS schools and DRPS schools in Bonao is larger than those of students in any other Education District where both FFS students and DRPS students participated in the math exam.

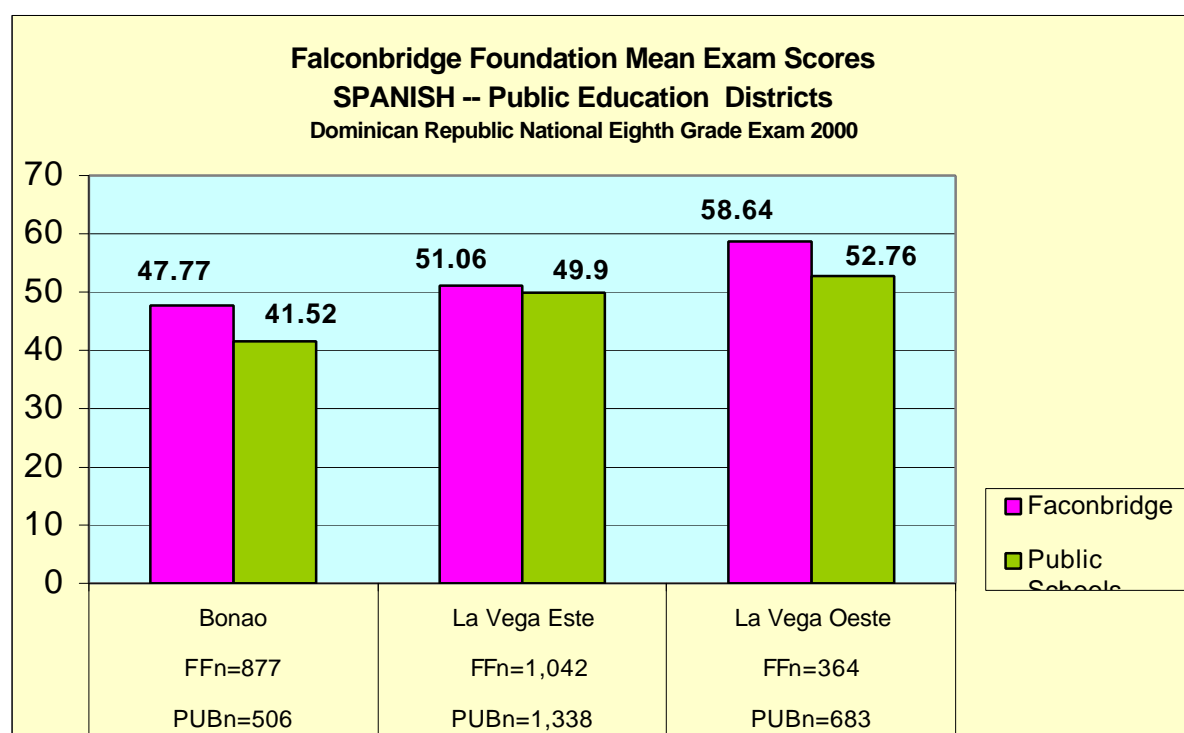
This is of particular importance because Bonao ranked among the lowest (92 out of 99) among all Education Districts in terms of math mean scores for eighth grade DRPS students. As with a similar comparison between the math mean scores of FFS and DRPS students in Monseñor Province, the large variance between the mean scores in math of FFS and DRPS students in Bonao suggests that the variance may be due to the Falconbridge Foundation intervention in the schools that it supports.

There is not much difference between the math mean scores of FFS and DRPS students and East and West La Vega. However, the math mean scores in these two Education Districts are higher than the math mean scores of students in the Bonao Education District. As a frame of reference, the math mean scores of students in Private Schools in Bonao, East La Vega, and West La Vega are 59.49 (n= 305); 54.30 (n=277); and, 50.67 (n=56), respectively.

The Spanish mean score results for FFS and DRPS students are similar to the math results in the Education Districts discussed above. The Spanish mean scores of FFS students in Bonao are much higher than the Spanish mean score of the DRPS cohort group in Bonao. The Spanish mean score results of FFS and DRPS students in East La Vega and West La Vega are also higher than the results of FFS and DRPS students in Bonao. FFS students participating in the Spanish exam are also from the same Education Districts discussed above: Bonao, La Vega Este; La Vega Oeste; Jarabacoa, Piedra Blanca and Constanza.

The mean score in Spanish for students in Falconbridge Foundation sponsored schools in these Education Districts are as follows: Bonao, 47.77 (n=877); La Vega Este, 51.06 (n=1,042); La Vega Oeste 58.64 (n=364); Jarabacoa, 51.98 (n=263); Piedra Blanca, 50.0 (n=306); Constanza, 44.32 (n=287). In contrast, the corresponding mean scores in Spanish for the DRPS cohort group are as follows: Bonao, 47.38 (n=); East La Vega, 51.34 (n=1,338); West La Vega, 52.76 (n=684); Jarabacoa, 51.70 (229); Piedra Blanca, 47.38 (20); and Constanza, 48.22 (n=287). A comparison of the three FFS and DRPS Education Districts with the largest number of students participating in the Spanish exam are shown in the chart below.

**Chart 6**



There are several points of interest in comparing the Spanish mean scores of FFS and DRPS students in the Education Districts discussed above. The Spanish mean scores of FFS Students in La Vega Oeste are higher than the Spanish mean scores of students in 94 percent of the DRPS Education Districts. They were also higher than the mean scores of private school students in 73 percent of the Education Districts. Finally, The difference between the Spanish mean scores of

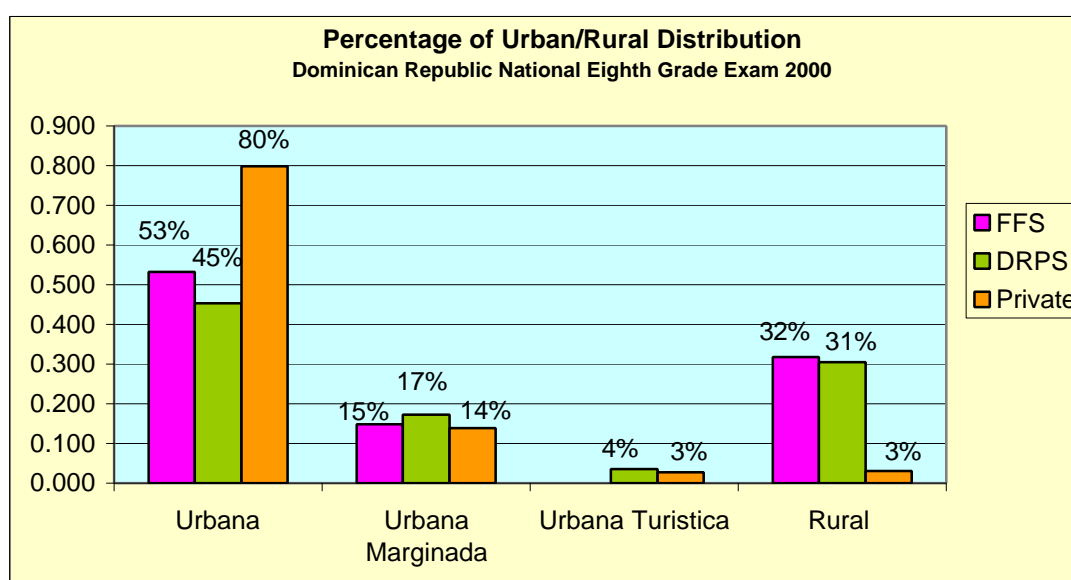
students in FFS schools and DRPS schools in Bonao is larger than those of students in any other Education District where both FFS students and DRPS students participated in the Spanish Exam.

This is of particular importance because Bonao ranked among the lowest (96 out of 99) among all Education Districts in terms of Spanish mean scores for eighth grade DRPS students. As with a similar comparison between the Spanish mean scores of FFS and DRPS students in Monseñor Province, the large variance between the mean scores in math of FFS and DRPS students in Bonao suggests that the variance may be due to the Falconbridge Foundation intervention in the schools that it supports. As a frame of reference, the Spanish mean scores of students in Private Schools in Bonao, La Vega Este, La Vega Oeste are 60.89 (n= 304); 53.38 (n=271); and, 53.35 (n=55), respectively.

### C. Urban/Rural

As might be expected, most of the students participating in the eighth grade math and Spanish exams in the Dominican Republic are from an urban setting.

**Chart 7**

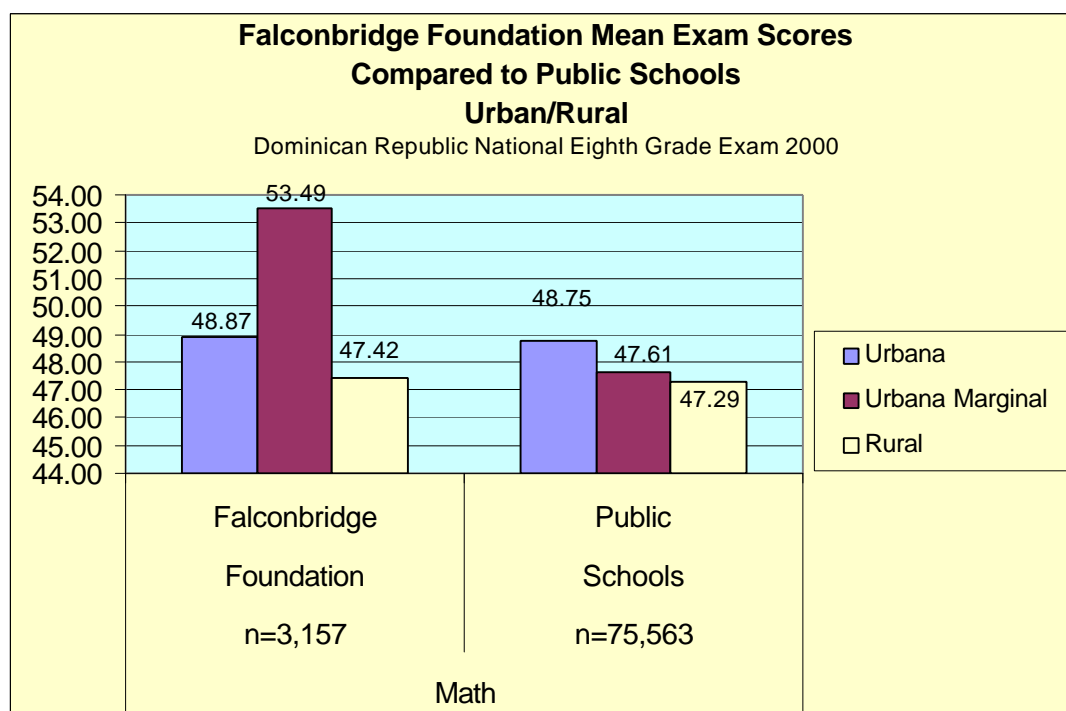


This holds true for students in schools sponsored by the Foundation (Urban = 53%); as well as for students in Dominican Republic Public Schools (Urban = 45%); and, students in Dominican Republic Private Schools (Urban = 80%). About one-third of Falconbridge Foundation and Dominican Public School students and only three percent of students in private schools participating in the math and Spanish exam were from a rural setting. Between 14 percent and 17 percent of all students participating in the math and Spanish exams were from a marginal urban area. Between four and three percent of the students in DRPS and private schools were from areas classified as urban tourist setting, and none of the students attending Falconbridge Foundation schools.

In addition to these four labels describing the “urban/rural” setting of students participating in year 2000 math and Spanish scores, the Dominican Republic database for the year 2000 National Exam database used two additional settings: (1) isolated rural and (2) rural tourist. None of the students from Falconbridge Foundation supported schools participating in the math and Spanish were from either of these two settings, and only about one percent of students from Dominican Republic Public schools were from each of these settings. None of the students in private schools were from the isolated, rural settings, and less than one-third of one percent of the students was from the rural, tourist setting.

The math mean scores of students in Falconbridge Foundation-supported schools in the urban, marginal urban, and rural settings were higher than the math mean scores of students from the Dominican Republic schools from these same settings. The math mean scores for students in Falconbridge schools for each of these settings are: urban, 48.87; marginal urban, 53.48 and rural, 47.42. The math mean scores for students in DRPS schools was urban, 48.75; marginal urban, 47.61; and, rural, 47.29.

**Chart 8**

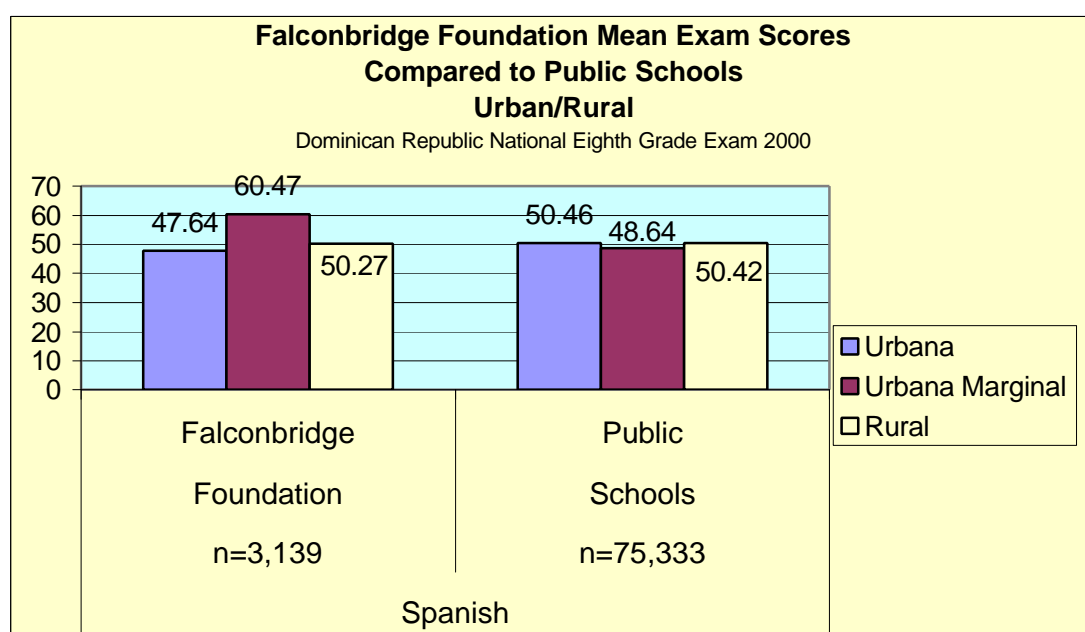




The Spanish mean scores of students in Falconbridge Foundation-supported schools are lower than the Spanish mean scores of DRPS students in the urban and rural settings, but higher in the marginal urban setting. Marginal urban and rural settings for students in Falconbridge Foundation schools were higher than the math mean scores of students from the Dominican Republic schools from these same settings. Students in the marginal urban setting participating in Falconbridge Foundation-supported schools had a higher Spanish mean score (60.47; n=466) than students in either of the DRPS or private schools in the same setting.

The Spanish mean scores for students in Falconbridge schools for each of these settings are: urban, 47.64; marginal urban, 60.47; and rural, 50.27. The Spanish mean scores for student in DRPS schools are: urban, 50.46; marginal urban, 48.64; and rural, 50.42. As a frame of reference, the Spanish mean scores for students attending private school are: urban 53.66; marginal urban 49.5; and urban tourist 60.03.

**Chart 9**



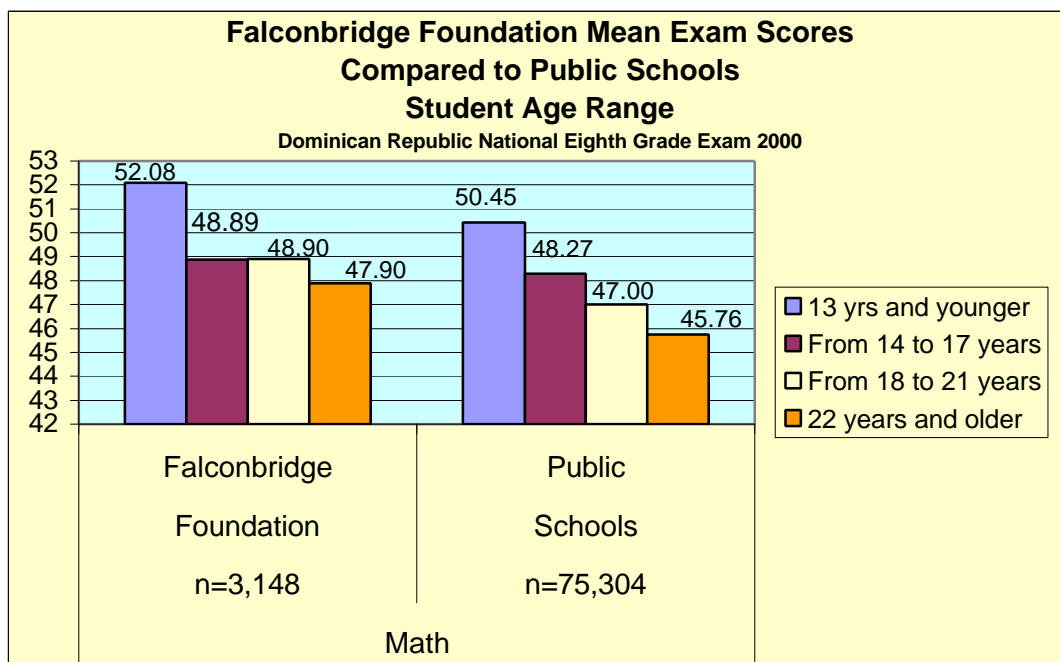
### *Student Age*

About 80 percent of students in Foundation-supported schools and Dominican Republic Public Schools who participated in the Dominican Republic math and Spanish exams were between the ages of 14 to 17 years. About 10 percent of this student population was 13 years and younger, and 10 percent 22 years and older.

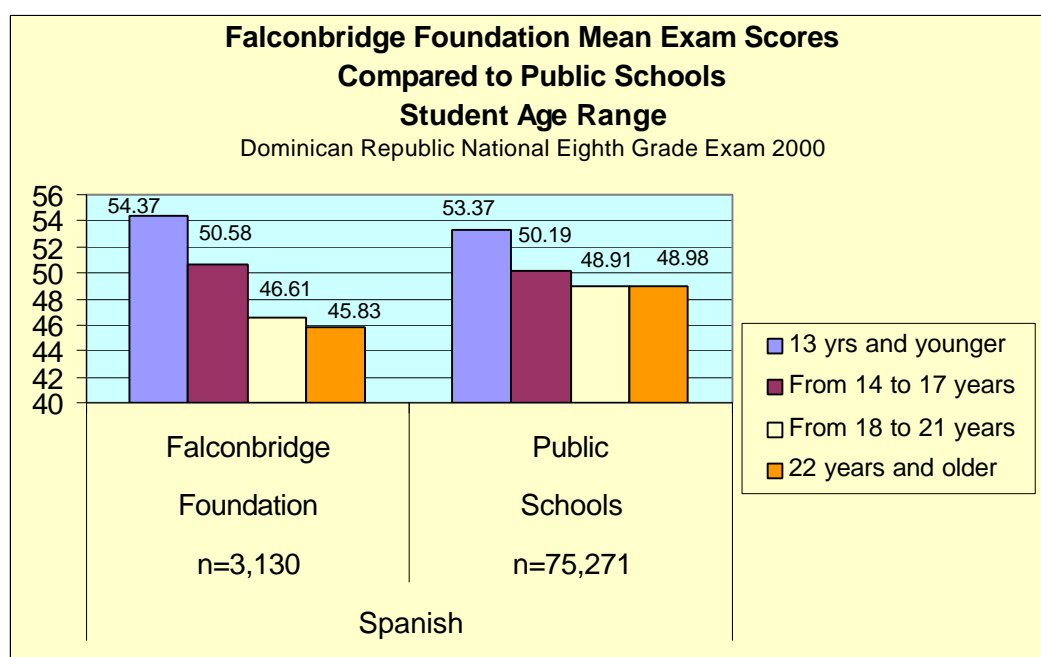
The results of the math exam for students in the Foundation schools and in the Dominican Republic schools appear to be correlated to the age of the students participating in the Exam – as the students get older, the mean test score appears to get lower. The math mean scores for the age-range of students participating in the Falconbridge schools is slightly higher than those of

Dominican Republic Public School students participating in the math exam. The mean scores for both groups are shown below in Chart 9.

**Chart 10**



As with the results of the math exam, the results of the Spanish exam for students in the Foundation schools and in the Dominican Republic schools appear to be correlated to the age of the students participating in the exam – as the students get older, the mean test score also appears to get lower. The Spanish mean scores of students 13 years and younger and 14 to 17 years who were in Foundation sponsored schools are higher than those of the DRPS cohort. However, the mean scores of students 18 to 21 years and 22 years and older who were in Foundation schools were slightly lower than those of the DRPS cohort. The mean scores for both groups are shown below in Chart 10.

**Chart 11****Discussion**

The overall results of the Dominican Republic Eighth Grade National Exam in Math and Spanish show that students participating in the exam generally do not do well. Importantly, girls participating in the two exams typically perform better than boys. The overall mean score for all students (Foundation schools, Dominican Republic public schools, and private schools) participating in the Math exam was 49.14. The overall mean score for these students in Spanish was 50.99.

Overall, students in Falconbridge Foundation schools who participated in the National Exam performed better in the math and Spanish exams when compared nationally to students in other Dominican Republic public schools not supported by the Falconbridge Foundation. This difference, even though significant, is not large. The mean score in math for students in Falconbridge Foundation Schools is 49.10. Their mean score for Spanish is 50.38. The national mean score in math for students in other Dominican Republic public schools is 48.27. Their mean score for Spanish is 50.27.

Students from private schools (about 25 percent of all students participating in the National Eighth Grade Exam) performed better in math and Spanish than students in Foundation sponsored schools and students in other Dominican Republic Schools, but not much better. The mean score in Math for students in Private Schools is 51.69 while their mean score in Spanish is 53.18.

The results of students in Falconbridge Foundation-supported schools were greater and more impressive, however, when compared only against the results of students in public schools in Monseñor Nouel province and in the Bonao District. For math, students in Falconbridge Foundation schools in Monseñor Nouel province had a mean score of 47.6 compared to 40.82 for students in other public schools. For Spanish, students in Falconbridge Foundation schools in Monseñor Nouel province had a mean score of 48.35 compared to a mean of 41.74 for students in other public schools. The math and Spanish exam results are similar for these two groups in the Bonao district.

Even more impressive than the results of Falconbridge Foundation students in Monseñor Nouel province and the Bonao district are the results of Falconbridge Foundation students in marginal urban areas. These students outperformed other public students in math and Spanish at the national level. The math mean for Falconbridge Foundation students in marginal urban areas was 53.49 compared to the national mean of 47.61 for students in other public schools. The Spanish mean for students in Falconbridge Foundation schools was 60.47 compared to the national mean of 48.64 for students in other public schools.

These significantly larger mean scores of students in Foundation schools suggest that there may be a number of factors that contribute to the academic achievement of students in Falconbridge Foundation supported schools. The lack of longitudinal data and other non-academic data (such as quantifiable SES data), however, make it difficult to exclusively attribute these results to interventions provided by the Falconbridge Foundation.

Lessons derived from the analysis of these data might include:

- The Foundation should establish objective benchmarks and standards for academic achievement for schools that it supports. Since performance in the country as a whole is low, the standards need not necessarily be tied to national average scores.
- Educational quality is low even in the Foundation schools. The Foundation needs to dedicate a significant amount of its resources to improving student achievement.
- The lack of baseline and comparative data make it difficult to establish cause and effect relationships and to assess the direct impact of Foundation programs on achievement. The Foundation needs to establish an information management system to collect data on student achievement.

#### **D. Other Indicators of Educational Quality**

Two other commonly cited standards of educational quality are included among the Foundation objectives: to reduce the number of school leavers and of overage students in the classrooms. Although considerable anecdotal evidence of change in these areas was offered in the interviews, the evaluation team was unable to establish quantitative evidence of these factors. The Foundation itself does not have baseline or current data on these variables for the sponsored schools. Data from the Ministry are unreliable and aggregated at a level that does not allow comparisons between sponsored and non-sponsored schools. In addition, according to Dominican law, a student can attend the public school of choice, without restrictions on residence. Changes in the population of the Foundation schools may not be an accurate

reflection of the retention and age of the students that started in the school, if the school attracts new students as conditions in the school improve. Likewise, some of the impact at the individual level of preschool classes, for example, or other benefits of the Foundation schools may actually play out in schools elsewhere in the country, since many of the Foundation schools are in poor areas with highly transient populations.